

# JEWISH LETTERS:

O R, A

## CORRESPONDENCE

Philosophical, Historical *and* Critical,

BETWIXT A

JEW and his CORRESPONDENTS,

In different PARTS.

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T O M E II.

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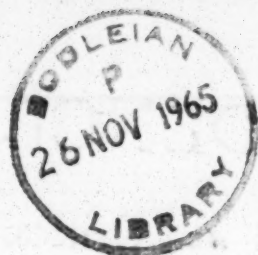
NEWCASTLE:

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Bookseller, on the Tyne Bridge.

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MDCCXL.







TO HIS  
*Theatrical Majesty,*  
**THEODORE I.**  
KING of *CORSICA.*

*SIRE,*



O jump from behind the Counter of a Bookseller's Shop to the Throne, is, I own, a bold and daring Leap; and your Majesty will no doubt think it very extraordinary, that your august Name should be prefix'd to this second Volume, when the first thought it made a glorious Appearance under the Protection of *Jemmy* the Bookseller's Boy: But if your Majesty will be pleased to recollect, that before your Arrival in *Corfica*

## DEDICATION.

you was almost as little known as he, I hope you'll pardon my Boldness.

WHAT an unlucky Thing was it for the *Hebrew* People, that you did not set up to be King of *Jerusalem*! An Attempt of that Kind would have, no doubt, been attended with the same Success which you have met with in invading a Country to which the *Genoese* have an undoubted Right. What Glory, what Honour, must have redounded to the *Jews*, from your personating the Messiah whom they expect! and how happy had it been for them to have had such a bold Adventurer at their Head! Perhaps the Difficulty of the Undertaking discouraged you from the Attempt; but the Supplies which you might have expected from the *Jews* of *Amsterdam* would have made all easy. Let me beg Leave, Sire, to offer you a salutary Advice: Should *Corfica* ever turn too hot for you, get yourself circumcised; and lead a People to the Banks of *Jordan*, who only wait for a Deliverer: But to gain the Affection of the *Hebrews*, you must change your Scheme of Government; the *Israelites* are not at all fond of being tied to a Post, nor will ever Severity do with them.

To

DEDICATION.

To me it would seem that you fall in with the Politicks of those who conquer'd the New World. *Ferdinando Cortes* treated the *Mexicans* just as you treat the *Corficans*. May it not be presumed that, in your Travels in *Spain*, you have catch'd the Genius of that General. Remember that Religion was the Pretext of all his Cruelties; but the Case is quite different where you now command: The Nations are all true sound *Roman* Catholicks. Perhaps you want to imitate the Duke of *Alba*; but if so, Sire, allow me to tell your Majesty, that you chuse a very bad Model: By his Cruelties he lost the half of the *Netherlands*, and they contributed not a little to the forming of the Republick of *Holland*.

LET me therefore beg of your fictitious Majesty, rather to follow the Example of many great Men, full of Valour and Courage, but always ready to pardon. *Henry IV.* to whom you're no more a-kin than the Cobler's to the King, conquer'd his Kingdom as much by gentle Means as by Force.

By imitating that Hero you'll gain the  
People's Hearts; the Inhabitants of your new  
A 3 Empire



## DEDICATION.

Empire will love you, and Strangers will come from all Parts to offer you their Service. Count *Bonneval* will throw off the *Turban*, and come to be your General. Baron *Polnitz* will take to his Band again, and be your Chaplain. The Duke of *Ripperda* will desert the King of *Morocco's* Interest to be your Minister of State; and I protest to your Majesty, that if some little Differences betwixt my Family and me had not been very lately made up, I should, with great Pleasure, have served you in the Station of your Chancellor: But you'll find Persons enough duly qualified for that high Post; and I promise you, that I shall make it my Business to enquire after Men worthy of it, and punctually acquaint your Majesty.

*I am,*

*With a profound Respect,*

*Your pretended Majesty's*

*Most humble, and most*

*Obedient Servant,*

*The Translator of*

*The JEWISH LETTERS.*





THE  
P R E F A C E  
BY THE  
TRANSLATOR.

**I**N the Preface to the first Volume I took care to answer the Aspersions cast upon me by the hot-brain'd Bigots, strenuous Advocates of every Person that wears a Cowl and Sandals. I promised to grant a Truce to the Monks hereafter; and I have been as good as my Word: For, in the Letters of this Volume, they are only occasionally mentioned.

I have endeavour'd that this Translation should be as exact and concise as possible, and have made it my particular Care to give the true Sense of the Author; not forgetting, at the same time, to  
give

## The P R E F A C E.

give it the *Air of an Original*, in which the greatest Part of *Translations* are very deficient.

*All the Pains I have taken to merit the Esteem and Approbation of the Publick are of no Account with the Bigots: They stand their Ground, and still cry out; "Does this Translator imagine that he lays us under any Obligation, when he spares our Friends the Monks, but comes open-mouth'd on our dear Sisters the Nuns? The one is well worth the other; and his second Volume as richly deserves to be burnt as the first." Some Jokes of Jacob Brito's, upon the Bones and sanctified Rags, which Avarice has christened by the Name of Relicks, have made them stark staring mad; and they would willingly bestow all the Money which these pious Frauds produce in a Year to make a Sacrifice of me. They publish every where, that I have no Religion; that none but a declared Enemy to Heaven would presume to translate the Jewish Letters: And, as an evident Proof of their Accusation, they say, that I make a Jest of St. Christopher's Chine-bone, and the Prophet Jeremiah's Tooth.*

*I might give this as a satisfactory Answer, That, when we're translating any Author, we ought to be exact in rendering his Thoughts as we find them express'd in the Original; and that the Translators of Lucretius were never attack'd for that Philosopher's Opinions. But I drop this Argument; and would have them to know, though they are pleas'd out of their abundant Charity to tax me with Irreligion, that the Jewish Letters contain nothing but what the Launois, the Ma-*  
billons,

## The P R E F A C E.

billions, and other Catholicks of Sense, speak loudly every Day. I'll go further, and even allow that there are some bold Strokes in them; but are they not pardonable in a Jew?

I proceed to another Article of Accusation, viz. The severe Criticisms upon the Court of Rome. To this I have but one Word to say. 'Tis to be observed, that Aaron Monceca, Jew as he is, scarce ever mentions the Sovereign Pontiff, but as a particular Prince and Master of Rome.

A Man may be a very good Catholick, and yet write against the Vices of a corrupted Court. Here's a plain Proof. Pope Pius II. little dreaming that he should ever be exalted to the Sovereign Pontificate, when he was but plain Æneas Sylvius the Poet, thus writes to his Friend John Perigal: "Nihil est, quod argento Romana curia non dedat; nam & ipsæ manus impositiones, & spiritus sancti dona venduntur; nec peccatorum venia nisi nummatis impenditur. Serva igitur aurum, ut, cum opus sit, præsto requiras\*, i. e. Money procures every Thing at the Court of Rome; the laying on of Hands, the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the Forgiveness of Sins: Be sure therefore to preserve your Gold for a favourable Occasion." If there be any Thing so bold as this in the Jewish Letters, I'm ready to acknowledge my Error in translating them; but if, on the contrary, Aaron Monceca has been much more reserv'd than Pius II. the Bigots must allow, that he has advanced nothing but what a staunch

\* Ænea Silvii seu Pii. II. oper. P. 149.

## The P R E F A C E.

*staunch Roman Catholick may say, since I do not think that they'll dispute this Pope's being a true Son of the Romish Church: And could they but get the better of the Prejudices that blind them, they would plainly perceive that the Fundamentals of Religion are not at all attack'd by exposing the Vices of particular Persons, who make Use of it as a Skreen to their Crimes, and cannot be too severely lash'd. How happy would it be could the Ambition and Avarice of the Court of Rome be restrain'd by laying them open to publick Censure!*

*Before I conclude this Preface, I shall take Notice of some other Objections. Aaron Monceca is charged with blaming the whole Body of Jansenists, though there are among them Men of Honour and Probity. They who make this Objection have not duly examined the Work, or they would have seen that the Jansenists are divided into two Classes. The ancient Jansenists, such as the Arnnaulds, the Paschals, and the Sacis, deserv'd the Esteem of all good Men, and are commended in twenty different Places. The Fathers of the Oratory, who chimed in with the Opinions of those great Men, have never been so much as mention'd in those Letters: And therefore, when the Jansenists are spoke of, it must be understood of the Sett of Convulsionaries; Men known for malignant Fanaticks, and dangerous Knaves.*

*The Jesuits are peek'd to think that their Society should be called ambitious and formidable. But, in good Earnest, would not they themselves heartily laugh at any one who should call them humble, Despisers of Honours, and very indifferent about*



## THE PREFACE.

*about the Riches and Grandeurs of this World? Has it not been acknowledged that they are regular in their Behaviour, learned, civil, polite, and even honest Men in their private Capacity? Aaron Monceca would have perhaps gone further, but for fear of telling a Lye.*

*Some French Men, who are accustomed to praise no Country but their own, have complained, that Aaron Monceca has shewn the same passionate Friendship for the Dutch, as Voltaire for the English. This Hebrew knew the Merit and Virtues of that Nation, and he was too much of a Philosopher to restrain himself, or to disguise his Sentiments.*

*Had he found elsewhere the same Qualities that he so much commended in the Dutch, he would have equally applauded them: His Sincerity could not bear with the pernicious Maxims of the Converters. Happy they who shall follow his Principles, which are so agreeable to the Law of Nature that they need no Apology! The mad Excesses of the hot-brain'd Catholicks have given him often Occasion to commend the Mildness and Wisdom of the Dutch Government. He seems to love the Nazarene Protestants; and that his Friendship for them was owing to their Fidelity to their Princes, particularly to Henry IV. his Hero; for whom they preserved the Crown when certain blind Catholicks endeavour'd to take it from him. And I must add, before I conclude, that, if the Jewish Letters are tax'd with Passages contrary to the Sentiments of the high flying Catholicks,*  
*those*



## THE PREFACE.

*those very Persons must be obliged to own, that it were to be wish'd all People agreed with his Sentiments about the moral Precepts, and the Respect due to Sovereigns.*

*What remains is to assure the Publick that, in the Translation of the following Volumes, I shall endeavour to merit the Applause given to the first, of which the Sale has been more favourable than I could have expected, and baffled the Hopes of those whose Bigotry could not bear with the Success of such a Book.*



JEWISH



# JEWISH LETTERS.

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## LETTER LVI.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.



*ENICE*, my dear *Monceca*, differs from many other *Italian* Towns, whose Inhabitants may be characteriz'd by general Remarks on their Manners; here the Common People, the Women, the Priests, the Children, and, in short, all the different Classes, deserve our particular Notice. In my former Letters, I treated of their Government in general; and, in this, a Detail of their Customs shall be the Subject of thy Entertainment.

When the Nobles go abroad, their constant Dress is a long Robe of black Cloth lin'd with Minever in Winter, and Ermine in Summer; and tho' Furrs are very improper for the Month of *August*, in *Italy*, should they drop down with Heat, such must be their Dress; Grandeur, Dignity, and Policy, make it necessary, and they must obey. 'Tis not in this

Particular only, that the noble *Venetians* are Victims to their Rank, but in almost all the Actions of Life.

They're commonly address'd by the Title of *Excellency*, and saluted by kissing their Sleeve, forming, towards the Elbow, a pretty large Bag, which serves, upon Occasion, for a Wallet to bring home Provisions from the Market; so that in this Sleeve, where resides the *Venetian* Grandeur, is often stowed a swinging Leg of Mutton, with a Dozen of Artichokes.

This will surprize thee, but 'tis certain that the Nobles are their own Caterers, without the Attendance of Servants; and when they're returning with their Cargo, 'tis the Custom to take no Notice of them in the Street, unless you be of their particular Acquaintance.

From the noble *Venetian* to the Gondolier, all set up for Wits and Politicians: The simplest Water-man thinks himself as pretty a Fellow as the ablest Senator; and makes his Boast, that no Enterprize is too difficult for his Capacity.

'Tis true, none can conduct a Love-Intrigue better than he, or bring it to a happier Issue, whatever Difficulties may lie in the Way: He's acquainted with all the Turns and Windings, knows the critical Minutes and the Back-stairs, keeps a Correspondence with the Chamber-maids, and furnishes Scaling-Ladders, upon Occasion: In short, he's qualified to give Advice to the shrewdest Monks, to be admitted, were he in *France*, a Member of the Secret Council of the Convulsionaries; and, to finish his Character, he's as deceitful as a *Jansenist*, as cunning as a Jesuit, as little scrupulous as a Cordelier\*, as debauch'd as a Carm†, and as hypocritical as a young Abbot hunting after a Living.

The

\* A Franciscan Friar, † A Carmelite, or White Friar.

The Carnaval brings Crowds of Strangers to *Venice*; and this Season of Gaiety, and publick Diversions, is the Water-man's Harvest; but no sooner Lent comes, then decamp's the Word: Travellers, Puppets, Comedians, Bears, Rareeshews, and Whores (I mean those whom Devotion had brought from neighbouring Countries) pack up and are gone; but for the Ladies of Pleasure who are Residenters in the Place, being necessary Members of the State, and greatly contributing to the Good of it, due Care is taken to prevent their deserting: To their other useful Qualifications they join no small Knowledge in Politicks, which, notwithstanding the Toil and Fatigue of their Profession, they study with great Application; and Instances might be given of some of those Female Politicians, who have very much distinguish'd themselves, particularly one, who, in Imitation of *Solon*, and to render the Profession of Gallantry illustrious, laid out the Money she had acquir'd, in building a magnificent Chapel, dedicated to a certain *Magdalen*, the famous *Egyptian* Curtezan, as the Legislator of the *Athenians* built a Temple to *Venus* with the Money which the publick Women of the City had earn'd.

We have here Abundance of fine Churches, and one would think that the *Venetians*, by the Names which they give them, favour'd a little of Judaism: Whether their not invoking the Saints canoniz'd by *Rome*, proceeds from a Contempt of that Court, I know not, but the most of their Temples are dedicated to our Patriarchs and Prophets; so that a *Jew*, upon his Arrival in this Country, is very much surpris'd when he hears the People speaking of St. *Job's* Church, St. *Moses's*, St. *Jeremiah's*, St. *Daniel's*, and St. *Zachary's*. The Monks who officiate at St. *Jeremiah's*, shew one of this Pro-



phet's Teeth; and I made a particular Enquiry, if, in the Temple of *St. Moses*, they had not some Piece of our Law-giver's Horns \*, but no such Thing was to be seen, nor any half-ripe Boyl of honest old scabby *Job*, preserved in a holy Phial. A Monk told me, as a grand Secret, that the Court of *Rome* sold such Relicks at a very high Rate, which occasion'd their Scarcity; and therefore I suppose there are only Arms, Legs, and Jaw-bones, of holy *Nazarenes* to be seen in the Temple of *St. Moses*; and that nothing remains of the ancient *Israelites* at *Venice*, but the Prophet *Jeremiab's* Tooth, inclos'd in a golden Case set about with Diamonds; and such a swinging Tusk it is, that I should have taken it rather for a Horse's than a Man's, had I not been told, that the ancient Fathers far exceeded us in Stature.

This monstrous Tooth puts me in mind of another Relick, which a Friend told me he had seen in a very fine Church at *Munick*, viz. The great *St. Christopher's* Chine-bone, as large as an Elephant's, and in great Veneration thro' the whole Country of *Bavaria*.

Tho' the Monks at *Venice*, as in other Countries, are mighty fond of their Relicks, yet few, except the common People, give any Credit to the Miracles attributed to them; Persons of Distinction look upon such Things as a proper Amusement for the Vulgar: But should they prove as troublesome as those of *St. Paris* in *France*, I make no Doubt but that the Senate would, without any Ceremony, order them to be thrown into the  
*Adriatick*

\* When *Moses* came down from Mount *Sinai*, *Aaron* and the People saw that his Face shined, *Exod. xxxiv.* The Latin Reading is, *Facies ejus erat cornuta*; and hence it is, that *Moses* is painted with Horns, which some of the Rabbies have interpreted *Horns of Magnificence*: The Error sprang from the doubtful Signification of the Hebrew Word, meaning Splendor or Brightness, and also Horns. *Goodwin's Civ. & Eccl. Rites, Lib. IV. Chap. 6. P. 197.*



## JEWISH LETTERS.

Y

*Adriatick* Gulf, and severely punish those who endeavour'd to make a Handle of them, in order to delude the People. Some time ago, the Republick being at Variance with the Sovereign Pontiff, he thought proper to suspend the whole Clergy of *Venice* from the Exercise of their Functions; the Senate ordered them not to mind his Holiness's Suspension, but to perform the divine Service, as usual: Some Monks\*, however, thought fit to obey the Pontiff, for which they were quickly sent a packing out of the Republick, and not allowed to return but by their Submission to very hard Conditions, after Matters were made up with the Court of *Rome*.

I have told thee already, my dear *Monceca*, how dangerous it is, in this Country, to plot against the State, and how severely the least Appearance of such Designs is punish'd: Great Rewards are given to Informers, when their Advices are really useful. Under the Piazza's of *St. Mark's* Palace, and in different Parts of the Galleries, there are Muzzles of Beasts, into whose Mouths, whoever pleases, may throw what Letters he thinks proper, to the Inquisitors of State; and this is called, *Denouncie Secrete*. Don't imagine that the Encouragement given to Informers, lays a Man at the Mercy of an Enemy; the Judges of the State-Inquisition are so wise and prudent, that no Person needs be afraid of Punishment, unless he be really guilty. There's no Country in the Universe where Men enjoy more Liberty than at *Venice*; the *Armenians*, *Jews*, and *Greeks*, are allow'd the free and publick Exercise of their Ceremonies and Rites; and the other Religions are also tolerated, the Government affecting not to know of their Assemblies kept in such a prudent and discreet Manner, that the Senate has no Ground to be displeased: In short, Liberty is so universal in this happy Country,

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that

\* The Jesuites and Capuchins.

that the very Monks and Friars enjoy it more than could be imagined; they may mask in Carnival-time, keep a Mistress, sing on the Stage, and do whatever their Inclinations lead them to, provided neither their Debauchery nor Devotion interfere with the Affairs of State. *Venice*, as to its Maxims, has nothing in common with *Rome*, but the Protection granted to Ladies of Pleasure; in every thing else, no People resemble other less, particularly with regard to Superstition and monkish Authority.

A pretty odd Story, which lately happen'd at *Messina*, entertains the Town just now, and sets the monachal Power in a glorious Light. The *Dutch* Consul in that City, had a very handsome Daughter, about 16 or 17 Years of Age: The Godly took it into their Heads to make a Saint of her; they could by no Means bear the Thoughts of such a pretty Creature's being some time or other a Prey to Devils, and therefore piously resolved, in order to set her in the right Road to Heaven, that she should be taken from her Parents, and that she should make free with a little of her Father's Gold, when she left him: The Authority of five or six *Spanish* Divines, who made it a meritorious Action in a Girl to rob her Father, if a Protestant, and that her Intentions were to retire to a Monastery, fully persuaded the young Lady of the Piety and Holiness of the Project, so that she was only at a Loss how to execute it; but a Scheme was soon contriv'd by two Reverend *Capuchin* Fathers, such as might be expected from Persons so keen as they to serve God and bilk *Satan*. They went frequently, as Mendicants for the Community, to the Consul's; who, good Man, never allow'd them to go away empty-handed, little dreaming of the friendly Office they intended him. These worthy Disciples of *St. Francis* found Means  
every

every Time they went to the House, to slip some of the young Catechumen's Clothes into their Wallet of Provisions; and, at last, when all the whole Wardrobe was carried off, she laid Hands on a large Purse of Gold, and with it made an Elopement: Her Parents soon understood where she was, and the Motive of her Flight, which strangely surpris'd them; but as the Case was without Remedy, they took Patience.

The new Saint was received Nun, and solemnly vow'd that Love to Man should never touch her Heart; that she should be constantly subjected to the Caprice of an old peevish Matron; and receive no Money, without directly giving it to the Monks.

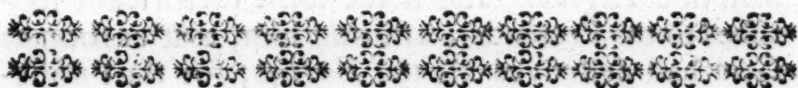
For near three Years the holy Convert was the Subject of general Conversation in *Messina*; and they were already laying Schemes to raise the hundred thousand Crowns, to pay for her Canonization after Death. Several Friars took Occasion in the Pulpits, from this Conversion, to rail against the Protestants; they prophesied the total Destruction of *Holland* and *England*, and made some rhetorical Flourishes to the Pretender, assuring him, that as soon as God had destroyed all the *English*, for the Punishment of their Rebellion, he should be restored, and might carry along with him as many Monks and Friars as he pleas'd, who would be very useful and assisting in re-peopling the Country.

When all *Sicily* was so much taken up with the blessed Nun, that every Mother nam'd her as a Pattern to her Daughter, and the People were ready to seize her old tatter'd Rags for Relicks and Scapularies, she, all of a sudden, disappear'd. At first they fancied she was miraculously hid from human Eyes, and in Conversation with *St. Rose* and *St. Clare*; but as she appear'd no more, an able Divine found out, that having had only for some time *sufficing Grace*, which is not sufficient, she

she had made a false Step; and that it was proper to wait for an Impulse of *Grace efficacious*, to bring her back: Though this Reasoning seem'd to be good, yet the Inquisition thought it favour'd of Jansenism; and the Divine was like to have been severely handled for his nice Distinction. As for the Saint, she made the best of her Way for *Holland*, in a *Rotterdam* Ship; and, to render herself worthy of *efficacious Grace*, executed the fifth Commandment, and ask'd Forgiveness of her Parents for her Disobedience. The Bishop, nettled to the Quick at the Loss of one of his stray'd Sheep, set all *Messina* in an Uproar, and the Authority of the Governor could scarce protect the Consul; his House was search'd, and his Servants strictly examined; but after many fruitless Perquisitions, the good Prelate was even forc'd to imitate the Consul's Patience.

Farewel, my dear *Monceca*; I long to hear from thee.

*Venice*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LVII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

THY Letters on the Manners and Customs of the *Venetians*, gave me great Pleasure. I admire their Wisdom and Prudence in setting Bounds to the Ambition and Enthusiasm of Monks: But of all their Regulations, the debarring the Ecclesiastical Tribunals from meddling with any thing that comes from the Press, is the most judicious; this is the surest Means of preserving the Mind in a proper Independency, and from falling into Superstition. The



The Ideas of the most illustrious Men become the Privilege of every Individual, and the Learned labour successfully in improving the Minds of their Fellow-Citizens, when these may freely study what those may freely write. The Ambition and Address of the Monks, to smother what made not for them, have robb'd the World of many valuable Works. What excellent Books have not been either wholly suppress'd, or lam'd and mangled by Bigots, before Printing was invented! and how happy ought we to esteem ourselves, that this noble Art has put a Stop to their Knavery this Way! Had Books remain'd much longer under their Direction, we should probably have had no other Historians, nor Authors, but some wretched Nazarene Writers; *The Conformity of St. Francis with Jesus Christ*, and the Annals of some Monks, would have supply'd the Place of *Titus Livy*, and of *Sallust*: 'Twas not the Fault of a Sovereign Pontiff, that the former, the Prince of Historians, was not wholly suppress'd; this Pontiff, nam'd *Gregory*\*, condemn'd this Work to the Flames. What Misfortune to the World, my dear *Brito*, had the Men who liv'd in this *Gregory's* Days, imitated his Enthusiasm! Malice, Guilt, and Hypocrisy, are mortal Enemies to Learning; the unmasking and exposing their Deformities, exasperate them against it.

While Mankind seem'd to have lost the Use of natural Reason, the Priests and Monks, the only Transcribers of Manuscripts, sold them at an extravagant Price, and took care to leave out what might give the least Hint of their Tricks; and they surely would have wholly suppress'd certain Books, but for us *Jews*, scatter'd all over *Greece* and *Italy*: We were in Possession of those Manuscripts, as well as they; and as it was not in their Power to deprive the Publick altogether of them, they were forc'd

\* *Gregory I.* surnamed the Great.



forc'd to be satisfied with taking out whole Passages, and sometimes substituting others in their Place. We have, to this very Day, Instances of these monachal Suppressions: A full Half of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Ovid*'s Works, &c. are wanting in the Editions publish'd by Monks; and if many others did not preserve them entire, we should soon lose those last Treasures of Antiquity.

I confess, my dear *Brito*, that 'tis inconceivable to me, how *Lucretius* has reached us entire. I know not who have been the exact and faithful Transcribers; if we're beholden to the Monks, I sincerely pardon some of their Rogueries, not that I approve of this Poet's pernicious Sentiments about the Divinity; may all Attempts that tend to lessen the profound Veneration due to the Author and Preserver of the World, be confounded! but the rest of his Work is so beautiful, so perfect, and so artfully diversified, that it must have been a considerable Loss to have been deprived of it.

Chance has restored to us *Petronius*, almost perfect; and we have also recovered some other Fragments of several Books. Perhaps, some time or other, it will be our Happiness to light on *Tacitus* and *Titus Livy*, entire and compleat: Abundance of People pretend that there is such a Copy in the Grand Seignior's Library. I have heard this positively asserted by many People; but I assure thee of the contrary, and I speak upon good Grounds.

*Lewis XIV.* always intent upon raising his Glory, wanted that the Universe should be obliged to him for the whole Works of *Titus Livy*, if they were to be found. He caused write to Mr. *Feriol*, his Ambassador at the *Porte*, to offer any Money for the pretended perfect Copy in the Library of the Seraglio: The Ambassador address'd himself to the Vizir, who propos'd it to the Grand Seignior: The Affair met with Obstacles; the Court did not much  
incline

incline to have the Manuscript verified, in order to know if it was more perfect than what we have. Mr. *Feriol* was not discouraged by the bad Success of his first Attempt; he took a proper Method to have the Affair proposed to the Library-keeper, with a hundred thousand Crowns, if he would deliver the M.SS. for a certain Time, and consent that what is wanting of this Historian should be copied out, so that the Book might be restored again to the Library, and no-body know what had been done. The Library-keeper jump'd at the Offer; an hundred thousand Crowns sounded well, and he fairly undertook to deliver the Book: But the Jest of all is, that after having sought, and better sought, the Manuscript could not be found; instead of a *Titus Livy* entire, even the Works that we have were not in the Library; or, at least, if they were, the Library-keeper did not think proper to mention them: Much griev'd to lose so large a Sum, he sent the Embassador Word, that what he wanted could not be found. I know it may be thought, that the Library-keeper, having reflected on the Danger he exposed himself to, might have changed his Mind: This is not absolutely impossible; but I also know, that a hundred thousand Crowns are very tempting, particularly with a *Turk* accustomed to run all Hazards for Money.

What is wanting of this Historian, gives the *French* great Concern; and I'm pretty well assur'd, that two hundred thousand Crowns would be willingly given to have it perfect: This Sum would be easily raised by Subscriptions in the Kingdom of private Persons, who would incline to have Copies of that valuable Book.

Could'st thou imagine, my dear *Brito*, that, in a Country where they are so fond of good Books, the Monks should have nevertheless found Means to establish a Sort of Inquisition against Book-selling?

selling? All the Books, in which they fancy themselves in the least attack'd, are prohibited under very severe Penalties: Those that read them, are punished by hard Penances at Confession. They animate the Magistrates to join with them; and it appears to be more dangerous to write in a Book, than to publish a System of Atheism, or some Work ridiculing Piety and Virtue: Yet when any thing that's good is printed in any Part of *Europe*, notwithstanding all the Pains taken to prevent its appearing at *Paris*, they have it directly, and even sooner than in any other Place; the Prohibition to hinder the Sale, very much augments the Price and Demand. The Hawkers take care to furnish the Beaus, Gown-men, and Courtiers. The very Ladies are fond of prohibited Books; and while an Attire-woman

*Bâtît de leurs Cheveux, le Galent edifice.*

*i. e.*

Rears up their Locks into a gallant Pile,  
Some foppish Lover reads aloud the while.

Thou'lt perhaps be curious to know why Books are liable to such Persecution, and which of them are most expos'd to it: Tho' all Works that tend to cure the People's Minds of Superstition, are generally prohibited, yet none are so carefully look'd after, as those that concern Jansenism or Molinism; and tho' all Endeavours to prevent the Sale of these, have no better Success than in the Case of other Books, yet no Pains are spared to compass it. I confess, my dear *Brito*, that the Suppression of these Works (commonly nothing else but a Series of Impostures, Calumnies, and abusive Language) would be of Advantage to the Publick. The *Jansenist* Authors are particularly noted for  
this

this Method of Disputing; and when Arguments fail, Railing takes Place; and they see a Man, at a very extravagant Rate, who, twice a Week, disperses over all *Europe* a printed Sheet\*, in which he's obliged to abuse all those who do not firmly believe, that the Water, in which a Bit of *St. Paris'* old Slippers has been boil'd, cures all Distempers.

I have often mention'd the *Molinists* and *Janse-  
nists*, but I never told thee, that 'tis impossible to live in this Country, without siding with one or t'other Party; such a Spirit of Cabal reigns at *Paris*, that were one a Disciple of *Spinoza*, he can't remain neuter: 'Tis no Matter with them, what a Man may be; in listing himself a Member, 'tis not required of him to make a Profession of Faith, only to swear an immortal Hatred to their Adversaries. Notwithstanding the Necessity under which a Man is laid to repair to one of the two Standards, I thought myself very much unconcern'd in the Disputes of a Religion, whose Fundamentals I believe to be wrong; yet, though they know me to be a Jew, born at *Constantinople*, an entire Stranger to the Jesuites, without Ambition, and wholly taken up in the Study of Philosophy, two or three Persons here, with whom I converse familiarly, have taken a Notion that I must be a *Molinist*. " We  
" plainly see, *say they*, your Aversion to *St. Paris*;  
" you openly condemn his Miracles. The *Con-  
" vulsionaries*, according to you, are Fanaticks who  
" deserve the Gallies: The Transpiration, *say you*,  
" that Fatigue, Drubbings, and the toilsome Ex-  
" ercise of tugging at the Oar, would occasion,  
" must purge the sharp Humours that, diffused thro'  
" the Mass of Blood, are the Cause of their Mad-  
" ness. You want to see the Abbot *Becheran* and  
" the Chevalier *Folard* metamorphos'd into Galley-  
VOL. II. C " slaves,

\* The Ecclesiastical Gazette.



“ slaves, and to recover the Use of their Reason  
 “ by a long Penance exercis’d in all the Ports of  
 “ the *Mediterranean*.” “ How! answer’d I, is it  
 “ deifying Hatred and Ambition, to wish the Pu-  
 “ nishment of Cheat and Imposture.” For this,  
 my dear *Brito*, is the true Picture of the *Jansenists*  
 and *Molinists*: The first are dangerous Impostors,  
 the last are mad after Dominion, and bent upon Re-  
 venge; both equally to be dreaded, but their Vices  
 different.

A *Jansenist*, the Child of Malice and Hypocrisy,  
 sucks with the Milk a Spirit of Rebellion and  
 Sedition; the first Words that he lisps out, are  
 Invectives and injurious Expressions against the  
 Pontives: His Hatred grows with Age; and, un-  
 der the Cloak of false Devotion, lies conceal’d a  
 base and dangerous Soul. A bad Christian, a re-  
 bellious Subject, a perfidious Friend, an unkind  
 Parent, and three Words constantly in his Mouth,  
 are the specious Pretext of all his Crimes. *The*  
*Liberties of the Gallican Church* are the cabalistick  
 Words of the *Jansenian* Sect, and there’s no odious  
 Crimes but what they deface and authorize.

The ambitious *Molinist* would every where com-  
 mand, and, like a violent Wind, beats down all  
 that resists, and spares what yields; he pulls the  
 proud *Jansenist* out of his Habitation, by an Order  
 from Court; the Protection of the Town and  
 Country cannot save him; and we may compare  
 him to the Oak, whose deep Roots can’t preserve  
 it from being pull’d out by the Hurricane: He  
 perishes while the Libertine, the Atheist, and the  
 Debauchee, who bend and seem to yield, are pre-  
 serv’d and enjoy perfect Tranquillity. ’Tis neither  
 the Crime nor the Criminal that the *Molinist* hates,  
 but the Rival of his Grandeur, or he that may be-  
 come such; to be able to do him Harm, is to be  
 guilty: Too much Knowledge or Virtue incurs  
 his

his Hatred; and he's less fond of good Qualities, than of Obedience. He's mild, plain, well-bred, complaisant, and even a Man of Integrity in his private Capacity; but take him as a Member of his Society, he's haughty, intolerable, a Tyrant, and a Persecutor: One half of the Misfortunes under which this Kingdom has labour'd, are owing to the Ambition of those whom they now call *Molinists*. Formerly the *Nazarenes*\*, to whom *France* was beholden for its Glory, were the Objects of their Rage: They had placed upon the Throne the greatest King in the Universe, but Villains pull'd him down; and the Consequence of this Crime brought about the Ruin of this Monarch's Benefactors.

Thou see'st by this Time, my dear *Brito*, what Judgment we're to make of the *Jansenist* and *Molinist* Sects; the first are dangerous, and the second are no less so, when they act collectively, and in a Body: But thou would'st make a very wrong Judgment of the *French*, if thou imagin'st that either those whom they name *Molinists* or *Jansenists* are much taken up about caballing. They assume these Names here, as I have already told thee, because 'tis the Mode to declare for one Side or t'other: Therefore, when I speak of the two Sects, I only mean those who are at the Head of them, who foment Divisions in the State, and who abuse the Goodness, Lenity, and Clemency of their Prince. If Severity and Rigour be pardonable in a Prince, it must be when the Peace and Tranquillity of the State make them necessary: If in the Beginning of these Troubles the Restlessness of the *Jansenists* had been severely punish'd, and the Ambition of the *Molinists* curb'd, every one would have thought of *Jansenius* and *Molina* what he pleas'd; and, perhaps, by this Time neither of them would have been remember'd.

C 2

Farewel,

\* Protestants.

Farewel, my dear *Brito*, may thy Prosperity still increase.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LVIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THY Arrival at *Smyrna*, my dear *Isaac*, gave me great Pleasure. Thanks be ascrib'd unto the God of our Fathers thou'rt now out of the Dangers to which a Change of Religion expos'd thee. Let me hear from thee as soon as thou reachest *Cairo*, and then I shall be perfectly easy.

The Particularities which thou mentioned concerning the Impostor *Sabatai*, have confirm'd me in the Resolution of giving Credit only to Things which I shall have Evidence for. An old Merchant of *Provence*, to whom I shew'd thy Letter, and who, in his younger Days had been for many Years at *Smyrna*, told me a pretty merry Passage betwixt *Sabatai* and two *Englishmen* settled at *Constantinople*.

They had made considerable Advances to some *Jews*, and were in some Fears about their Money; in order to recover it, they made Application to *Sabatai*, while he was Prisoner in the Castle of the *Dardanelis*: He heard them with great Gravity and Calmness, and wrote the following Letter to the *Jews*, by way of Order for their Payment.

LETTER

## L E T T E R,

*To you of the Jewish Nation, who expect the Coming of the Messiah, and the Salvation of Israel, Peace for ever.*

I HAVE been informed that you are indebted to several *Englishmen*: It appears just to us to order you to satisfy your Debts; and if you refuse our Commands upon this Occasion, know that you shall not enter with me into my Kingdom.

The *Englishmen* thank'd *Sabatai Sevi* in the most respectful Terms; and, by the Authority of this Cheat, and the Imbecility of the *Jews*, found Means to get back their Money.

Another Scene no less diverting, happen'd to *Sabatai Sevi* during his Confinement, and which, in the Sequel, laid open his Knavery, and ruin'd him. A *Jew*, named *Nehemiah Cohen*, learned in the *Hebrew*, *Syriac* and *Chaldean* Languages, and as well seen in the *Rabbinian Cabala* \* as *Sabatai* himself, wanted to share in his Glory, and therefore desired to have a Conference with him. At first their Conversation was smooth and calm; but not being able to settle Matters upon a suitable Footing for both, they turn'd hot, and flew out into a violent Passion. "Is it not true, said *Cohen*, that according to the Scriptures there ought to be two Messiahs; the first, poor, despised, a Preacher of the Law, Fore-runner and Servant of the second, who is to be rich, powerful, and victorious? My Ambition, continued he, goes no higher than to be *Ben-Ephraim*, or the poor Messiah; what Prejudice can this do to your Fame? and will you upon that Account be less the victorious Messiah?" After much debating, *Sabatai* consented

C 3

that

\* A sort of Tradition among the *Jews*.



that *Cohen* should be the poor Messiah ; and their Dispute was at a Close, when *Cohen* bethought himself that the Fore-runner should have made his Appearance before the other, and therefore blamed *Sabatai* for his too great Precipitation, who, on his Part, finding this Freedom a little too presumptuous in a Servant, told him in plain Terms, that he turn'd him out of his Place ; and that he neither was, nor ever should be, *Ben-Ephraim*. And I, answer'd *Cohen*, give you my Word, that I shall effectually prevent your being acknowledg'd or receiv'd as *Ben-David*. The Quarrel rising higher and higher betwixt the two Impostors, they at last came to Blows : The Guards, who from the Door of the Prison had overheard this comical Dialogue, came running in to separate the Combatants. *Cohen* was as good as his Word, and inform'd the Ministry of all *Sabatai*'s Tricks, by which he daily gained more and more Credit with the *Jews*, and might at last stir them up to dangerous Attempts. We have often had Monsters amongst us, who, with a View to satisfy their Ambition or Avarice, by imposing upon their credulous Brethren, have assumed the Title of *Saviour of the Jewish Nation*, and the august Name of *Messiah*.

In the Reign of the Emperor *Theodosius* the Younger, there was a *Jew* in *Candia* who did our Nation much more Harm than the wretched *Sabatai*. This *Jew* was named *Moses*, and pretended that he was the very Prophet who conducted the *Israelites* in the Desert, and deliver'd them from the *Egyptian* Bondage. For a whole Year he travell'd up and down in *Candia*, preaching in the Synagogues, and promising to the *Jews*, very numerous in that Country, that he would carry them over Sea dry-footed, without shipping, and land them in the Heart of *Judea*. He appointed a certain

tain Day for his Departure, and, followed by a great Multitude of People, went to a pretty high Part of the Coast, ordering those who were foremost to throw themselves into the Sea, without any Dread or Apprehension of Danger. The silly Fools, deceived by this Villain, threw themselves headlong into the Sea, and would have met with the Punishment due to their Credulity, if some Fishers, who happen'd to be near, had not come to their Assistance, and hinder'd others from following their Example.

We are not the only Nation, my dear *Isaac*, that has been abused by Impostors. What Kingdom is there, what Religion, that has not produced corrupt Children? The *Nazarenes* ought not to upbraid us with our false Messiahs: Have not they daily People among them who, under the Pretext of Religion and Vail of Devotion, throw them into most absurd Errors? *Sabatai Sevi* made no such Progress with the deluded *Jews*, as *St. Paris* with the *French*. No *Israelite* had ever the Art to make Fits of Enthusiasm pass for visible Marks of the Grace of God, bestowed upon a Parcel of Fools who were to be the Oracles of the divine Will. We have sometimes given into the Extravagancies of Men who promis'd us agreeable Things; and by the Pleasure which their Doctrine afforded, they found us proper Instruments to manage our own Deception. But those who seduce the *Nazarenes*, promise them nothing but Disasters and Misfortunes: All the *Convulsionaries* of *Paris* prophesy the End of the World, the dethroning of Pontives, and the Subversion of States.—Men must be far gone in Enthusiasm to chuse such Prophets for Directors and Guides!

I know, my dear *Isaac*, that what's uncommon is catching with the People, and that Novelty is their Darling: But the *Nazarene* Papists are more  
subject

subject to Superstition than other Countries. We seldom see People possess'd in *England* and *Holland*; the Devils are great Strangers in those Countries. As there's no Monk to shew the Power of his Sanctity over Hell, *Belzebub* and *Astaroth* form no Caravan there, or, at least, no such Thing is heard of.

I had Advice lately from the *Hague*, that a Merchant of that Place complained much of a Spirit who came in the Night-time and tore his Clothes and Furniture: The credulous People gave directly into the Snare. Every body ran to the haunted House, were shew'd torn Pieces of Stuff and Linen, and entertain'd with many surprising Tricks of this malicious Spirit. The Grand-Bailiff, inform'd of this Affair, order'd the little Devil to give over his Pranks, and the Merchant to say no more about him; with Certification, that if he did not obey, the Punishment due to the other's Misdemeanours, should land upon himself: Upon which the Spirit took to his Heels, and the Merchant now lays the Blame upon the Rats of what he formerly attributed to an invisible Substance.

The *Nazarene* Papists pretend that this was one of the mild and good-natur'd Devils, otherwise all the Authority of the Magistrates would not have made him move one Step; adding, that he's of the Class of Spirits easily conjur'd; and that, without having Recourse to the Ritual, one of *Quinault's* Opera Tunes would have done the Business as effectually as an Ecclesiastical Conjunction: And upon this Head bring an Instance of a certain *Ignatius* of *Loyala*, who, to chase the Devil out of a Woman possess'd, made use of this Verse of Virgil;

*Speluncam Dido dux & Trojanus eandem.*

One Cave a grateful Shelter shall afford  
To the fair Princess and the *Trojan* Lord. *Dryd.*

He

He had scarce pronounced these Words, when the Woman was thrown down, the Devil thrown out; and, begging hard that he might not be shut up in the infernal Cave, he obtained Permission to go where he pleas'd, but upon Condition that he should never more possess any of the Race of *Adam* \*.

Is not this, my dear *Isaac*, a very pretty Way of making the Devils scamper off? If a single Verse of *Virgil* has the Power to banish a Demon, 'tis very likely that this Poet, by frequently repeating over his *Æneid*, would be able to chase them all, by Degrees, out of Hell, and at last purge that Place of their detestable Race: In this he would render a signal Service to his Comrades the Authors, particularly *Horace*, *Catullus*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Petronius*, who, much addicted to Pleasure, and accusom'd to good Company, cannot well put up with the blustering Manner of Devils.

The mentioning of those famous Authors puts me in mind of a new Book † which a Hawker has brought me, and which I have read with great Pleasure. 'Tis a Translation of four Epistles in Verse of the illustrious *Pope*, the best *English* Poet. This Work is good. The Translator, in his Prose, has kept up to the Strength and Beauty of the *English* Verse. The Subject of these Epistles is lofty and moving: All the four run on abstracted Matters, express'd in a clear and concise Manner.

I. The first treats of the Nature and State of Man with respect to the Universe. The Author proves that he is not an imperfect Being, but suited to the Place and Rank which he holds in the Creation, and conformable to Ends and Relations to him unknown ‡. He founds the present Happiness  
of

\* *Johannes Christianus Fromman de fascinatione. Lib. III. Part IX. Cap. IV. Numb. XV. Pag. 549.* † *An Essay on Man; by Mr. Pope.*

‡ If this Passage be faithfully transcrib'd from the French Translation,



of Mankind, partly upon the Ignorance of future Events, and partly upon the Prospect of future Advantages, and condemns their unjust Complaints against Providence.

II. The second teaches Man to know his Nature and State as an Individual: It unfolds the Source and Spring of all our Actions flowing from the two Principles of Self-love and Reason, and delineates the narrow Compass of our Knowledge.

“When in latter Times, *says this Poet*, the superior Beings saw a mortal Man unfold the Laws of Nature, they admir’d such Ingenuity in an earthly Shape, and look’d upon a *Newton* as we do upon an Ape.”

Superior Beings, when of late they saw  
A mortal Man unfold all Nature’s Law,  
Admir’d such Wisdom in an earthly Shape,  
And shew’d a *Newton* as we shew an Ape. *Pope.*

I know not, my dear *Isaac*, if this Thought will please thee as much as it does me: I find in it something grand, sublime, and withal extremely natural. The *French* Translator has done it Justice.

III. In this third Epistle we have a Description, which gives a terrible Blow to human Pride, and highly deserves the Approbation of Men of Judgment and Taste. “Foolish Man, *says the Poet*, “has God work’d solely for thy Good, thy Joy,  
“thy

tion of Mr. *Pope*’s Letters, either the Translator has mistaken the Poet’s Meaning, or the Word *connues* for *inconnues*, i. e. known for unknown, is a typographical Error; which is more likely than to imagine that the Translator should so grossly mistake his Author.

Then say not Man’s imperfect, Heav’n in Fault;  
Say rather Man’s as perfect as he ought:  
His Being measur’d to his State and Place,  
His Time a Moment, and a Point his Space.  
Heav’n from all Creatures hides the Book of Fate,  
All but the Page prescrib’d, their present State. *Pope.*

" thy Pastime, thy Dress, and thy Table? He who,  
 " for thy Food, nourishes the wanton Fawn, for  
 " him enamels the flow'ry Meads. Is't for thee  
 " the Lark soars high and chants the warbling  
 " Note? No; — Joy tunes the Pipe, and wide ex-  
 " pands the Wing. Is the sweet Linner's Song to  
 " charm thy Ear? No; — he chirps his Love, and  
 " courts the list'ning Fair. Is Glory all to him  
 " who gracefully can ride? No; — The fiery  
 " Steed shares in the Rider's Pride. Is thine the  
 " Seed with which the Ground is strow'd? No;  
 " — the feather'd Kind must have their daily Food.  
 " Is thine the Harvest of a fruitful Year? No;  
 " a Share is due to the laborious Steer.

Has God, thou Fool! work'd solely for thy Good,  
 Thy Joy, thy Pastime, thy Attire, thy Food?  
 Who for thy Table feeds the wanton Fawn,  
 For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry Lawn.  
 Is it for thee the Lark ascends and sings?  
 Joy tunes his Voice, Joy elevates his Wings.  
 Is it for thee the Linnet pours his Throat?  
 Loves of his own, and Raptures swell the Note.  
 The bounding Steed you pompously bestride,  
 Shares with his Lord the Pleasure and the Pride.  
 Is thine alone the Seed that strows the Plain?  
 The Birds of Heav'n shall vindicate their Grain.  
 Thine the full Harvest of the golden Year?  
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving Steer. *Pope.*

Nothing in Poetry, my dear *Isaac*, can exceed  
 this beautiful Passage. What different Images, what  
 Variety, what Stretch of Imagination! The Poet  
 presents all Nature to our View, and the Philo-  
 sopher proves that other Creatures share with us  
 in its Benefits: And indeed, could we but lay aside  
 Prejudice, we cannot miss to know, that neither  
 we nor other Creatures are intitled to the sole  
 Possession

Possession of what bountiful Providence has bestowed to subsist the whole. The Passage just now quoted is from the third Epistle. The Author in it examines the Nature and State of Man with respect to Society: He gives us a Detail of the different Ages and Periods of the World, shews the Origin of first Societies, form'd by Instinct, and closely link'd by Reason.

The last of these four Epistles treats of Happiness, which Men seek with so much Eagerness. The Poet proves that it is attainable in whatever State Heaven has been pleas'd to place us; and that a sound Judgment and upright Heart will certainly conduct us to true Felicity. "Ask the Learn'd, *says he*, the Way to Happiness, they are blind: "The one bids us serve, the other, shun Mankind. "Some place in Action the true Bliss, others in "soft Repose: Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these. Such Definitions are no more "or less than this, that Happiness is Happiness. "To one the want of Pain is Pleasure: Another, "uncertain how to fix it, is involv'd in Doubt; "and some think that Virtue has no Influence at "all."

Ask of the Learn'd the Way, the Learn'd are blind;  
This bids to serve, and that to shun, Mankind.  
Some place the Bliss in Action, some in Ease;  
Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these.  
Who thus define it, say they more or less  
Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?  
One grants his Pleasure is but Rest from Pain;  
One doubts of all; one owns ev'n Virtue vain.

*Pope.*

This, my dear *Isaac*, is a true and lively Picture of our Blindness. Our Disputes run on the Means of Happiness, and we seek abroad what we may find

find at home. In Virtue, Health, and a Competency, consists true Happiness; and whoever enjoys them, wants no more: But as the two last depend not absolutely upon ourselves, the first, by the Blessing of Heaven, makes up their Want. So that Virtue, my Friend, is its own Reward; and never Man was wholly wretched, who made it the Rule of his Life; not that we're to expect the ridiculous Effects ascrib'd to it by the *Stoicks*, but that it still will yield us Comfort, and sweeten the bitter Pill.

May it be thy constant Study to practise it, and may thou feel the noble Effects of it, to support thee in all the Trials of Life. *Adieu.*

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LIX.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

THIS probably is the last Letter I shall write thee from *Venice*; I think of going about the End of the Week for *Ravenna*, from whence I shall proceed for *Naples*, and take *Loretto* in my Way, where I shall view the famous Chapel so much cry'd up by *Nazarenes*, and so much frequented by their Pilgrims: The *Roman* Pontives have granted so many Indulgences to those who visit this holy Temple, that whoever does it with due Reverence and strong Faith, has it in his Power to deliver the Souls of his Ancestors from the expiatory Flames.



The Courtezans of *Venice*, whose Trade does not permit them to go as Pilgrims to *Loretto*, have found out another Expedient to assist the Dead. They consecrate a certain Day of the Week to the Relief of Souls out of Purgatory: The Graces and Smiles are banish'd for that Day, and give Place to Sighs, Silence, and grave Looks; and those Mansions of Pleasure are metamorphos'd into gloomy mournful Abodes. But as their good Intentions alone will never prevail with Monks to pray, they tell their Customers very gravely, *Sir, you must be so good as to pay a little more than usual, because what we earn To-day is for the Behoof of Souls in Purgatory*; and then they shew several Receipts from the Priests, carefully fill'd up, as Vouchers of the Money's being faithfully employ'd to such pious Uses: After this Prelude they fall heartily to Work for the Salvation of Souls. When Trade goes not briskly on in the Days set apart for such good Works, they endeavour to obtain *gratis* some Prayers for the Souls of their deceas'd Parents. 'Tis true, that the Persons who are employ'd in that Office, having reciprocally Occasion for their Assistance, they easily come to a good Understanding, and are helpful to one another, without being oblig'd to come down with the Cash on either Side.

The Zeal and Devotion of these Ladies of Pleasure will seem very odd to thee; but all Ranks of People at *Venice* have the Art of reconciling Debauchery with Religion. There are few Monks, Priests, Abbots, or Monsignori's, who have not their Hackney-Misses. When a Man is not rich enough to entertain one of these kind Creatures wholly for his own Use, he admits of a Partner; and if both their Purse are not strong enough, a third is brought in for a Share. In all the gallantish Contracts the fair Lady always takes care to reserve one Day of the Week for herself, to be employ'd in Honour of some Saint. We

We have a great many Mothers in this Country who prostitute their Daughters from a Principle of Conscience. They gravely tell you, that by this Means the Girls get as much Money as will make them Nuns; a pretty Manner truly of making consecrated Virgins! And I doubt much if the ancient *Romans* would have made Choice of *Saburastreet*, as a proper Place of Probation for their Vestals. But so it is here; and we seldom see that the *Venetian* Nuns have Courage enough to withstand a vigorous Attack: Their Morality has nothing of morose or rigid, and they are less restricted than other Women; they see and converse with whom they please in the Parlours, and their Conversation has nothing of austere in it. They listen to Monks when they cannot better do; but 'tis only at the last Extremity, and when they have quite lost Hopes of any better Conquest: Not but that there are Numbers of Monks at *Venice*, whose fresh Complexion and lively Air are very capable of touching a Lady's Heart; but it would seem that their Fate is less happy here than in the other Towns of *Italy*. To compensate this, they enjoy greater Liberty than elsewhere. In Carnival-time they partake of all the Diversions, go to the Opera, and sing or play in the Orchester, as they think fit: They make no Difficulty of going into the Ridotto, the Place where is kept the famous Faro-bank, and there lose the Church's, or their own, Money: In short, any thing that the most resolute or loose Soldier may do, is not derogatory to the monachal Decency; so see we that the Priests are Examples of the most infamous Debaucheries. The Mistresses of the principal Ecclesiasticks glory in their Lovers, and are delighted that the Publick know their Adventures: They're as indiscreet in their Intrigues, as the *French* Beaus in their Conquests.

As I was passing one Day in a Street near to St. Mark's Square, I happen'd to cast my Eyes upon a young Lady at her Window, who appear'd to be very handsome: I ask'd a Friend who was with me, if he knew her? 'Tis, answer'd he, the Mistress of his Eminency the Patriarch: *La gentil Donna de l'eminentissimo Patriarcha di Venetia*. I made, as thou may well imagine, my dear *Monceca*, a very low Bow to Madam the Patriarchess. Thirty Paces from thence, I perceived another pretty Lady, and ask'd her Name. This is the young Beauty, said my Friend, who captivates the Heart of the first Prebendary of St. Mark: *Il primo Canonico della Chiesa di San Marco è Sciaro de la sua Bellezza*. Another Bow to the Lady Prebendary of St. Mark. I thought I should have no more Occasion to trouble my Friend with Questions, nor myself with Bows; but a third Lady, extremely beautiful, forced me to plague the Gentleman once more: Is this fair Lady also the Property of the Church? Yes, yes, said he; our happy Dean possesses all her Charms: *Questa bellissima Donna è la Puttana del Premicerio*. But what's the Reason, answer'd I, that all the Women of this Street belong to the Clergy? Because, replied he, the most of them live hereabouts, and that they're glad to be near the Objects of their Wishes. Those Ladies whom you see have great Interest with the Churchmen, and there's not a young Priest who does not make his Court to them assiduously.

Some time ago the Patriarch's Mistress had a Quarrel with the Legate's: This Affair set the whole Clergy by the Ears; the Monks took the Legate's Part, and the secular Priests that of the Patriarch. The two illustrious Lovers took up the Quarrel of their Princesses, with great Warmth; and that the Publick might not know the Subject of



of their Hatred, under the Pretext of some Pun-tilio's of Honour they found Means to thwart one another upon all Occasions. The Senate, Enemy to such Doings, and always careful of the Peace and Tranquillity of the Republick, notified to the Court of *Rome*, that it was necessary to send another Legate, which was accordingly done; and the former return'd with his dear *Signora Clara*, on whom he bestow'd a very fine House at *Rome*, where they pass many happy Minutes.

The Sovereign Pontiff's Legates, or Embassadors, are very apt to stir up Troubles, and foment Divisions in the States where their Master sends them. The horrible Massacre of *St. Bartholomew* was owing to the pernicious Counsels of a Legate \* sent to *Charles IX.* King of *France*. This King, and the perfidious Ambassador, resolv'd upon the Death of the King of *Navarr* †, and of all the Protestants: The *Roman* Legate did not incline that the Pretext of this Prince's Marriage with *Margaret*, should be made use of; but *Charles IX.* having convinced him that it was the surest Means of being revenged upon their Enemies, he consented without further Hesitation, looking upon every thing that might sacrifice the Enemies of *Rome*, as laudable and good. Some *Nazarenes*, to whom I mentioned this Action, endeavour'd to excuse the Legate, and to throw it upon the King; but the Fact is proved by an unexceptionable Author, who was inform'd by People concern'd in it ‡.

D 3

Can

\* Cardinal *Alexandrin*.

† Afterwards *Henry IV.* King of *France*.

‡ His Holiness added, that when the News of the Death of *St. Bartholomew* came to *Rome*, the said Cardinal *Alexandrin* pronounced these Words, *Praised be God, the King of France has perform'd his Promise.* His Holiness being Auditor of the said Cardinal when this happen'd, and having accompanied him in his Embassy, knew every Circumstance of the Affair. —  
See the Cardinal *Ossat's* Letter dated from *Rome*, Sept. 22, 1559.



Can there be any thing so monstrously wicked, as to make the most sacred Things subservient to Murder and Massacres, and to cover, under the Vail of Friendship and Kindred, the most mischievous Designs? Good God! What a Marriage was the King of *Navarr's*! Furies surely lighted up the Torch; and Horror, Rage, Cruelty, Despair and Impiety presided at the Ceremony: "The only Motive I have, said *Charles IX.* to the Legate, for concluding the Marriage with the King of *Navarr*, is, to be revenged upon my Enemies, and to punish such hainous Rebels." This King, thirsting after the Blood of his Subjects, offer'd the perfidious Embassador a Ring as a Pledge of his performing the intended Crime; which, an *Italian* Historian says, he refused, not being in the least mistrustful of so good a King's royal Word: But after the fatal Day of *St. Bartholemew*, *Charles IX.* sent him the Ring formerly offer'd, as an Evidence of having faithfully perform'd his Oath \*.

Are such Oaths, my dear *Monceca*, to be kept? The Performance of them is more detestable than the Promise. How happy had it been for *France* that *Charles IX.*'s Opinion of this Legate had corresponded with what a *French* Poet puts into the Mouth of one of his Heroes.

Non, je ne promis rien.  
 Le Legat † Instrument d'une indigne Foiblesse,  
 S'empara de mon Cœur, en Dicta la Promesse.  
 S'il ne m'eut inspiré ce barbare Dessein,  
 Mon Cœur n'auroit jamais promis du Sang humain.  
 Crebillon's Idomeneus.

Thus

\* The Life of *Pius V.* par *Girolamo Catena*, written in *Italian*, and printed at *Rome* by *Aless. Gerdano*, in 1588. *Catena* says, that *Charles IX.* ordered this Pozy to be engrav'd on his Ring, *Nec pietas possit mea sanguine solvi.*

† Neptune in the Original.

Thus paraphrased :

————— No Promise did I make.

My Words, far from the Dictates of my Heart,  
Spoke but my Weakness, and the Legate's Art ;  
Without that Art, the bloody base Design  
Had found no Access to a Heart like mine.

This Passage puts me in mind of another of the same Author, which perfectly characterises the Policy of the *Roman* Court.

*C'est ainsi, qu'en perdant le Pere par le Fils,  
Rome devient fatale à tous ses Ennemis \*.*

i. e.

*Rome* prompts the Son to cut the Father's Throat,  
And thus makes sure the Conquest of her Foes.

The most deceitful and dangerous Politicks, when they lead to the End proposed, become just and lawful with the *Romans*, and, generally, with all the *Italians* : But happy are the Nations, my dear *Monceca*, who make them their Study only to know, and prevent evil Designs form'd against them, and not to punish one Crime by another, and to authorise the most villainous Actions.

Another Legate, during the Wars which *Henry IV.* was engaged in, before he came to the peaceable Possession of his Kingdom, debauch'd, from that Prince, all the Subjects and Soldiers that possibly he could : Promises, Threats, Prayers, and, above all, Indulgences, the Coin which the Court of *Rome* can most easily part with, were employ'd by him to this Purpose. He wanted particularly to carry off a Gentleman named *de Givri*, and made use of all his Rhetorick in extolling his Merit and Reputation ; vainly imagining, that to flat-

ter

\* *Crebillon's Rhadamistus,*

ter his Vanity was the surest Way to gain him : But all his Oratory was lost ; *Givri* remained faithful to his Prince. The Legate perceiving that nothing would do, exhorted him, as a good *Nazarene* Papist, to ask, at least, Pardon of the Sovereign Pontiff, and of him his Representative, for what was pass'd, giving him to understand that it would be very readily granted. This *Givri*, naturally a jocular merry Fellow, threw himself directly at the Legate's Feet, and, with an Air of Contrition, ask'd Forgiveness of all the Mischief he had done to the Sovereign Pontiff's Party at *Paris*. In the mean Time, the Legate made some Gesticulations with the Right-hand, and mutter'd some Words, which the *Nazarens* call *Absolution* : But *Givri* interrupting him, said, with a very grave Countenance, " I beg you'll be pleased to grant me also Absolution for the Time to come, because I am fully resolved to treat the King's Enemies worse than before." The Legate, mad to have been thus play'd the Fool with, revers'd the Absolution just given to *Givri*, who was perfectly easy, and continued faithful to his Prince \*.

If all the *Nazarene* Papists had been People of such Honour and Honesty as this faithful Subject, *France*, always submissive to the Masters whom Providence had set over it, had never been a Prey to Discord and Faction : The fiery Superstition of Monks could not have induced Brethren to sheath their Swords in one another's Breasts, and Religion would never have been made use of as a Pretext to Rebellion.

Here's

\* *Genu flexo supplex, & composito vultu, veniam se contra Parisienses admissorum petere professus est, interpositaque aliqua mora, quasi serio rem gereret, postquam a Cardanali benedictionem accepit, antequam surgeret gratiam sibi fieri petijt ; nam decrevisse contra Parisienses acrius quam antea bellum gerere : Quibus dictis, cum resu se a Cardinalis gratiam faciam revocantis conspectu subduxit.* Thuanus Tom. IV. Pag. 154.

Here's a Principle, my dear *Monceca*, of which I think every honest Man, and every loyal Subject ought to be persuaded. Should a Monarch turn Turk, a Subject is not, upon that Account, discharged from his Oath of Allegiance. What ! shall private Men have a Right to exclaim against Violence and Force in Matters of Religion and Conscience, and Monarchs, seated upon their Thrones, must not pretend to chuse their own Religion, or profess a Faith which their Subjects don't approve of ! None but Fools, mad Men, or meer Papists, can maintain such an unreasonable Opinion. Were I Sovereign of some *Nazarene* Kingdom, I would have a Church established of *Laicks*, Men of Candour and Probity, who should preach a System of Morality quite different from that of the Monks. How happy had it been for *Henry III.* and his Successor, that such Preachers should have been set up in opposition to the *Leaguers*, and those sent to *Paris* by the Pontives and *Spaniards*, constant Enemies to the *French*, always vanquish'd by them, even when their Divisions were at the Height, and having no Hopes of ever subduing them by open Force, had Recourse to the Poison of monachal Fury.

*Helas ! elle a des Rois égorgé le plus grand \* !*

*i. e.*

By it, alas ! the best of Kings was lost !

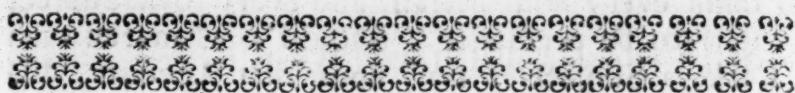
Adieu my dear *Monceca*. As soon as possible thou shalt hear from me again ; in the mean Time accept of my best Wishes for thy Prosperity.

*Venice, \*\*\*\*\*.*

LETTER

\* *Racine's Athalia.*





## LETTER LX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

**I** Make no Doubt, my dear *Isaac*, but that by this Time thou'rt got to *Alexandria*. If thou should'lt make any Stay in that City, I shall take it as a Favour that thou'lt give me some Account of the Antiquities thou seest there. I'm told there are a great many which Time has respected and preserv'd entire; and that there would have been many more, had not the Barbarity of the *Turks*, the Fury of Wars, and the Avarice of the Natives, occasion'd the Ruin of many Edifices, thrown down, either by Superstition, or in Hopes of finding Gold hid in the Foundations, or in the Heart of the Walls. A great many Pillars have been pull'd down in Hopes of finding such Medals under their Bases, as they had got under others: So that the most exquisite Pieces of Architecture were inhumanly broke down; and we owe the Preservation of those that still subsist, only to their immoveable Solidity.

I have often talk'd at *Constantinople* with several *Jews* who had made the Tower of *Egypt*, and told me many extraordinary Things, the Truth whereof I should gladly have confirm'd by thee. They assured me that the Manners of the *Egyptians* differ'd in many Things from those of the *Turks* at *Constantinople* and in all *Greece*. Pray inform me of all these Things; instructed by one of thy Judgment and Prudence, I shall know the Truth, and  
in

in Exchange thou may expect to have what Remarks I make on the Manners of the Countries through which I shall travel when I leave *France*. My Affairs at *Paris* will soon be ended; and I expect to be gone in a Month or two. I shall be obliged to take a Trip into *Flanders*, from whence I shall embark for *England*.

Could I prevail with the Chevalier de *Maisin* to accompany me, I should reckon myself extremely happy in such a Companion. I lie under infinite Obligations to him for his daily Assistance in making me perfectly acquainted with his Nation, and in resolving all my Doubts and Difficulties. He conducted me Yesterday to an Author's House, a Friend of his, who has the Reputation of an elegant Writer, and one of the best Pens in *France*. We found him, with two other Authors, in such a close and warm Dispute, that they took no Notice of us when we enter'd the Room, nor so much as perceived that we were with them, till the Chevalier presented me to his Friend. After the first Civilities were over, my Friend, being curious to know the Subject of such a serious Conversation, address'd them thus: "Gentlemen, May it be ask'd  
" without Offence what Question you are discussing? Whether in Metaphysicks, Mathematicks,  
" or natural Philosophy? It is upon Book-selling,  
" said the Chevalier's Friend, and consequently  
" more important to the *Republick of Letters*: For  
" what's more useful and essential to the Learned  
" than the Means of subsisting? This is, however,  
" what the Booksellers most strenuously oppose;  
" and, if the Government falls upon no Method  
" to restrain their Avarice, Authors for the future  
" must find out the Art of spiritualizing their Bodies, so as to have no occasion for Nourishment.  
" Is it not amazing, that Booksellers should only  
" pay

“ pay the *Abbé Grifonet* \* a Crown of six Livers  
 “ for the Sheet of his Romances? *A Crown!* cries  
 “ out one of the Authors, the same *Abbé* just now  
 “ mention’d: Add, Mr. *Tragedin* †, if you please,  
 “ *correcting included*. Monstrous! answer’d the  
 “ Chevalier’s Friend; you dishonour the Dignity  
 “ of the Profession, in falling the Price to six Livers  
 “ the Sheet, *correcting included*: I’d rather a hun-  
 “ dred Times over die for Hunger.

“ But, Mr. *Tragedin*, answer’d the third of these  
 “ Writers, who had not till now spoke, you don’t  
 “ consider that a hungry Belly has no Ears. ’Tis easy  
 “ for you to declaim on the Grandeur and Dignity  
 “ that ought to shine in our august Character; you  
 “ have a competent Fortune, and may struggle with  
 “ the Avarice of Booksellers: But, if you were  
 “ often reduced to a single Dish of Coffee, taken  
 “ upon Tick at *Gradot’s* ‡, which must serve for  
 “ Breakfast, Dinner and Supper, you would be  
 “ glad to take any Price offer’d for your Works.  
 “ You’re happy in your Misfortunes, Mr. *Vers-*  
 “ *fadet* §, replied the *Abbé*, to have Credit at *Gra-*  
 “ *dot’s*: I have quite lost mine there. About fifteen  
 “ Days since, his Wife gave me in an Account of  
 “ two thousand nine hundred and thirty two Dishes  
 “ of Coffee, and not being able to make Payment,  
 “ she would trust me no more. How, Sir! said  
 “ the Chevalier *de Maisin*, you owe two thousand  
 “ nine hundred and thirty two Dishes of Coffee?  
 “ Yes, answered the Author: I have paid nothing  
 “ for nine Years; and at the Rate of one Dish *per*  
 “ *diem*, the Account is exact, allowing for Leap-  
 “ years.

\* *Grifonet*, in the figurative Sense, signifies a Scribbler or bad Writer.

† *Tragedin* may signify a bad Tragick-Poet.

‡ A Coffee-house at the End of *Pontneuf*, frequented by the Wits.

§ *Vers-fadet* may signify a Poetaster or Composer of Doggrel-Rhyme.

“ years. I thought to have paid the three first Years  
 “ with the Price of a Manuscript; but, as it did  
 “ not yield the half of the Sum that I expected, I  
 “ could not perform what I design’d. But I fancy,  
 “ Mr. *Vers-fadet*, continued the Author, you’re as  
 “ deep in the Chalk as I; for we were admitted  
 “ Members of *Parnassus* much about a Time, and  
 “ both install’d upon the same Day in the Coffee-  
 “ house of the Wits. ’Tis true, replied the o-  
 “ ther; but, foreseeing that my Fate would be no  
 “ better than yours, I presented a Sonnet to *Gra-*  
 “ *dot’s* Wife, extolling her to the Skies, for which  
 “ she has given me Credit for six Months longer;  
 “ by that Time I hope to have finish’d my *Uni-*  
 “ *versal History* in eighteen Folio Volumes, and  
 “ to satisfy her. I made an Offer of a Dedication  
 “ of this Work to my Baker, upon condition that he  
 “ would furnish me Bread *gratis* for eight Years;  
 “ but he was deaf to my Proposal, loving Money  
 “ more than Immortality. I am not, however,  
 “ vex’d that he and I did not hit it, because I have  
 “ another Person in view who can do me more  
 “ Service.

“ I’m very much afraid, answer’d the *Abbé Gri-*  
 “ *fonet*, that you’re out in your Calculation: The  
 “ Financers and Undertakers conceive now the  
 “ Ridicule to which they’re expos’d by Dedications;  
 “ and are sensible, that to praise a Scoundrel in this  
 “ Way, is publicly to expose him. The Beaus  
 “ and Lords are often as ill provided with Money  
 “ as Authors. Gown-men imagine that Thanks  
 “ are the just Value of dedicatory Epistles; and  
 “ your Wits who are rich, think Encomiums good  
 “ Payment: So that I verily believe we shall at  
 “ last be obliged to follow the Example of a mo-  
 “ dern Author, who dedicated his Books to the  
 “ Shades and Ghosts of the Dead.



“ I have a Subject, replied the other Author, of  
 “ a very different Nature from those mentioned,  
 “ viz. *The New King of Corsica*. I make no Doubt  
 “ but that he’ll be very well pleas’d on his glorious  
 “ Accession to the Crown, to receive the Congra-  
 “ tulations of the principal Members of the Re-  
 “ publick of *Letters* on that happy Event. I shall  
 “ make it appear, in the *Epistle Dedicatory*, to all  
 “ *Europe*, that he has lawful Pretensions to *Cor-*  
 “ *sica*. As for that, replied the Chevalier smiling,  
 “ you must allow me to think, that you’ll not find  
 “ it so easy a Matter to reconcile such an extra-  
 “ ordinary Paradox with Probability. Excuse me,  
 “ Sir, answer’d the Author: Here’s the Method  
 “ by which I propose to do this. My first Step  
 “ will be to prove, that in the Beginning of the  
 “ *Corsican* Government, Bastards could succeed to  
 “ the Crown; then I’ll cause one of the ancient  
 “ Princes of that Island travel into *Germany*, and  
 “ marry privately, without Formality, or any other  
 “ Witnesses, but Love, a Daughter of the House of  
 “ *Newhoff*: And thus, from this first Bastard, ca-  
 “ pable of succeeding, I’ll establish the Right of  
 “ *Theodore* I.

“ I yield — said the Chevalier, and confess,  
 “ Mr. *Vers-fadet*, that I could never have imagin’d  
 “ that you would have fallen upon such an Ex-  
 “ pedient. Nothing more remains but to know  
 “ if the new King of *Corsica* will be pleas’d with  
 “ your making him descend from that first Bastard.  
 “ He would be in the wrong to be angry, replied  
 “ the Author; but, to prove that this is by no means  
 “ derogatory, I’ll lay before him the Example of  
 “ *Sultans*, who are all the Children of Love, and  
 “ owe nothing to *Hymen*.

“ I am, says the *Abbé Grifonet*, of Mr. *Vers-fadet*’s  
 “ Opinion; and whatever Way the Accession of  
 “ *Theodore* is justified, he ought to be content:

“ And

“ And were I sure that it would not be disagree-  
“ able to Mr. *Vers-fadet*, nor prejudicial to the  
“ Dedication of his *Universal History*, I would  
“ dedicate to the same Monarch the *Life of Prince*  
“ *Eugene*, which I shall finish in a Day or two.  
“ You have wrote the *Life of Prince Eugene*, said  
“ the Chevalier? Yes, Sir, answer’d the *Abbé*; I  
“ began it the same Day that the *Gazettes* mention’d  
“ his Death, and the Bookfeller for whom I work  
“ had it directly advertis’d, that I might not be pre-  
“ vented by another Author. You have, no doubt,  
“ said the Chevalier, several Memorials that have  
“ been communicated to you? I have the *Gazettes*,  
“ and the *Historical Mercuries*, replied the *Abbé*:  
“ With this Help only, Thanks be to God, and  
“ the Desire of getting Money, I have done thirty  
“ two Sheets in eleven Days and a half; and I  
“ shall soon be at the End of my Work: But how-  
“ ever expeditious I may be, I’m nevertheless but  
“ slow in comparison of Mr. *Vers-fadet*. He has  
“ compos’d his *Universal History* in a Year and a  
“ half: He wrote a Folio Volume every Month,  
“ and yet I’m persuaded when it appears it will  
“ gain the Esteem of Judges and People of Taste.  
“ You are too indulgent, replied the other Au-  
“ thor; I deserve not these Praises. ’Tis true, I  
“ might have, perhaps, done something tolerable  
“ had I but employ’d a little more Time; but I  
“ stinted myself to three Sheets of Print a-Day:  
“ Good or bad, so much must be done; there’s  
“ no living if we do otherwise: And truly as we’re  
“ paid, we work. When the Work is printed, ’tis  
“ the Bookfeller’s Business to get it sold: If it lies  
“ in their Shop, so much the worse for them.  
“ When I want Money, and that the Work re-  
“ quires Dispatch, my whole Family assist: My  
“ Wife dictates, my Children write, and I revise;  
“ thereafter it takes its Chance.

“ You’re happy, said the *Abbé Grifonet*, to have  
 “ People to assist you ; for me, I have neither Wife  
 “ nor Child, and I’m oblig’d to do all myself ;  
 “ but then I never take the Trouble to look over  
 “ the same thing twice.

“ I don’t blame you, said the Chevalier’s Friend ;  
 “ since the Booksellers treat you so unhandsomely,  
 “ you ought to repay them in the same Coin. Not-  
 “ withstanding the Itch I have for Glory, I’m per-  
 “ suaded that I should write in as great Haste as  
 “ you, were I press’d by Hunger. And I confess,  
 “ that I owe the half of my Genius to the Tran-  
 “ quillity of my Stomach, which I can fill before  
 “ I set Pen to Paper.”

I don’t know, my dear *Isaac*, if the Conversa-  
 tion of these Authors will afford thee any Diver-  
 sion ; but I found it so original, that I could not  
 hinder myself from communicating it to thee.

Be careful of thy Health, and let me have the  
 Pleasure of often hearing from thee.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## L E T T E R L X I.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

U P O N coming out of the Author’s House  
 whom I mentioned in my last Letter, the  
*Chevalier de Maisin* proposed that I should accom-  
 pany him to a Bookseller’s Shop in St. *James’s*  
 Street, where he design’d to buy some Books : As  
 we enter’d the Shop, we found the Master very  
 much

much out of Humour, and scolding at his Wife, Child, Servants, &c. What's the Matter with you, Sir, said my Friend; you appear to be in a very bad Humour? The Matter, Sir, answer'd the Book-feller! I wish all Authors and Correctors were at the Devil, and that the whole Race had been extinct a hundred Years since. But once more, said the Chevalier, let me know the Subject of your Discontent; perhaps it may be in my Power to serve you? You shall know it, Sir, answer'd the Bookfeller; and you'll find that such an Accident could not happen but to a Man as unlucky as myself.

You're acquainted with *de Thou's* History, allowed, by all, to be an excellent Book. I undertook to reprint a new Translation of it, corrected, and embellish'd with Notes; but certain I am that *Belzebub* has a Finger in the Pie, for all my Projects evaporate in Smoak, and my Money too. I had agreed with an Author for that Work at nine hundred Livres, and thought I had made a good Bargain; but what think you happen'd? the Author who had undertook this Revival, understood no *Latin*, and spoke *French* but very indifferently; he enter'd into Partnership with a *German*, who indeed knew some *Latin*, but jabber'd very bad *French*. These two cursed Authors began the Work; and, in the interim, my Money went, sometimes six, sometimes four Pistoles: In short, after advancing near to three hundred Livres, I wanted to know how Things stood, before I went further; and accordingly gave some Tomes, which I had got in as perfect and corrected, to be revised, but the Examiners found they were abominable: In place of correcting the old Translation, they had quite spoil'd it; and the new one was neither *French*, *German*, *Italian* nor *Spanish*. 'Twas impossible to divine in what Language these wretched



Dawbers had wrote; only one might easily perceive that the Stile smell'd rankly of *Gascoinism*. Sadly vex'd, as you may believe, with the Loss of my Money, I took the Work out of such cursed Hands; and am fully resolved, for the future, to plague all Authors as much as possibly I can.

" Your Anger, answer'd the Chevalier, will soon  
 " be over; and I'm pretty well assur'd that you  
 " would not fall out with the Journalists, even  
 " those of *Trevoux*, whose Writings are now only  
 " read in Snuff and Butter-shops: The criticising  
 " of the Books which you publish, will still keep  
 " you in Awe, and force you to treat them with  
 " good Manners. I own, answer'd the Book-  
 " seller, that I'm forc'd to keep fair with them;  
 " but I love them not the more for that: If they  
 " praise my Books, I know what it costs me;  
 " and there's not a single Abstract but costs me a  
 " Pistole. But for that, reply'd the Chevalier,  
 " you have the Advantage of high Encomiums  
 " made often on a very wretched Performance:  
 " There are Plenty of Fools who look upon the  
 " Journalists as Oracles, and, upon their Appro-  
 " bation, purchase very bad Books at a high Price.  
 " Though it must be allow'd that you poison the  
 " Publick with the insipid Productions of three or  
 " four bad Authors, yet in the *Republick of Letters*  
 " there's no Punishment for such a Crime: Ig-  
 " norants may write Books, Fools may read them,  
 " and you Gentlemen Booksellers may sell them  
 " to the best Advantage. Were it otherwise, said  
 " the Bookseller, how could we live? what must  
 " become of that Crowd of Authors and Cor-  
 " rectors who subsist by the Nonsense which they  
 " scribble: All Trades have their Quacks; bad  
 " Writers are such in the *Republick of Letters*,  
 " and their Stuff often sells better than the Works  
 " of the greatest Men. But now that you put  
 " me

“ me in mind of Journals, continued the Book-seller, I had almost forgot that I was to send this Letter to a Journalist. Allow me, said the Chevalier, to read it; I can promise Secrecy both for myself and for my Friend.” The Book-seller frankly comply’d with his Request, presented the Letter, which the Chevalier found so very comical that he begg’d to have a Copy; this, with some Difficulty, and on reiterated Promises of Secrecy, was granted.

## L E T T E R

*From the Bookseller S——\* to his Journalist.*

MY Servant, Sir, will deliver you ten Pistoles for the quarterly Payment of the present Journal. I must beg Leave to tell you plainly, that I am not very well satisfied with your Manner of writing; and, if this continues, there will be a Necessity for me to take another Method: You neither praise my Books, nor discommend those of my Fraternity, with that Zeal and Warmth you ought. Endeavour, in your Criticisms and Invectives, to imitate the Journalists of *Trevoux*; see how they bespatter, right or wrong, every thing that drops from the Pen of a *Jansenist* or a Protestant: Those are Models to be follow’d; but it would appear that you still pretend to some small Share of Modesty, and that you dare not boldly say, that an excellent Book is but meer Trash; you must still go roundly to Work. Those same Journalists of *Trevoux*, whom I have mention’d as an Example for your Imitation, have they not boldly condemn’d some of *Bayle* and *Boileau*’s Works, without any other Reason than that they were composed by Persons whom they did

\* *Quid rides? mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.* Hor. Sat.

did not love? Let Avarice supply the Want of Hatred with you; think of this, Sir. If Lying frightens you, that's your Business; for me, I don't pay you to speak Truth, but to commend the Books that I publish, the bad as well as the good, and to rail at all those that may hinder the Sale. It would seem to me as if you affected to imitate the Candour of *Bayle* and *Sallo*; you may do so if you please, but then you must change your Bookseller, as I will my Journalist. Endeavour therefore, Sir, if you incline that we should do Business together, to put on a little more Impudence; and, in your next Journal, be sure to rail at the Works of the Marquis *D'Arg*——, both what he has already publish'd, or what he may publish afterwards, of which you neither know the Title nor Subject. You must pull to Pieces all the Books printed for *N*—— and *P*——, *Jansenists* and Enemies to God, the State, and, which is more, to me. You must be very exact in informing yourself of the Books publish'd by *Molinists*, and take care to extol them to the Skies, particularly those in which the Jesuites, or even their Lay-Brothers, may be concern'd. You must criticise, in the strongest Manner, *Voltaire's* new Tragedy; and be sure to brand him with Want of Religion, tho' you may very probably have less than he. You ought not to stick at this, because 'tis only an Injury thrown upon this Author, in order to prepossess the Biggots and Strangers against him. The Reverend Father, Rector of the Jesuites, told me Yesterday, that he could not be too severely punish'd for having spread the Venom of Jansenism in his *Henriade* and *OEdipus*.

*I am,*

*S I R, &c.*

*I dare*

I dare say, my dear *Isaac*, that the Singularity of this Letter will divert thee, as it did my Friend and me: We were very merry, and indeed a little hard upon the Bookseller, for ordering Panegyricks to be bestowed on bad Books. "If we only printed good Things, answer'd he, the one half of the Bookfellers would starve, and the other half would not be much better. Few can distinguish betwixt a good and a bad Book: If 'tis but new, we get it off. Due Care is taken to have it pompously recommended in the *Journals*; and the Publick, always fond of Novelty, buys, without Distinction, the good and the bad."

What this Bookseller said will be the less surprising, if thou consider'st that few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the true and counterfeit Brilliant. A Book, where every thing is disposed with Judgment and Exactness, and where the Beauty of the Thoughts answer to the Order of Things, has not that Influence upon the Imagination of some Persons, as another which attacks the Mind with some brisk and lively Flashes of Wit, not at all permanent, but resembling those Meteors, which, by their sudden Blaze, threaten to set the World on fire, yet in a Moment after are extinguish'd. The Women, particularly, are fond of Books that captivate their Attention with extraordinary Adventures. The sublime, the grand, the good, are less entertaining than the marvellous; and therefore it is that Romances are more agreeable to the Generality of the Sex than History, though those who would join the useful to the agreeable, seldom find it in the former. I would have the same Motto put at the Head of all such Books as we find in the old *Amadis's*:—*Read and forget*.—To read them is agreeable, but to remember them is pernicious. The Heart is soften'd with the tender, and becomes effeminate; the  
Mind



Mind contracts a Liking to Adventures dangerous for young People, and capable to throw them into the wildest Extravagancies.

'Tis not my Intention, however, to forbid altogether their reading of Romances; my Zeal is not screw'd up to that Pitch: But I would have them read by way of Amusement, and not as a serious Study; and that they should be look'd upon as agreeable Dreams, invented to divert, now and then, Men of Business, and to unbind the Minds of the Studious. In that Case a Romance would become an innocent Diversion; and there would be no such thing as People consuming whole Months together in the rapsodical Entertainment of Inchantments, Amours, Duels, Combats and Scenes of Treachery, Coquetry and Villany: The agreeable and the useful would go hand in hand; and Men desirous of Knowledge would make the reading of History, Morality and sound Philosophy, their principal Occupation. Such a Scheme, 'tis true, to refine the Taste, would be a mortal Blow to the most Part of Authors, who pick up a Living by the Sale of some ill-digested Novels which they print; and, this Resource failing, would perhaps be obliged to turn Shoemakers: But, after all, where would be the Harm, supposing it were so? The Number of bad Authors would be diminish'd, and our Shoes become cheaper. Such a new Regulation would be an Advantage to the State, and to the *Republick of Letters*: The latter would get rid of Members that are a Disgrace to it, and the Number of Tradesmen in the Kingdom would increase; and perhaps the Authors, thus metamorphos'd, would be very well pleas'd with their new Condition; for how many Shoemakers are there who eat and drink much better than Writers? and how many of the latter who, without Credit from their Shoemakers, would go bare-foot?

foot? However ambitious they may be of Fame, they would soon be made to understand that a Tradesman, who leads a quiet Life in his own Habitation, and is sure of his Dinner and Supper, is an hundred times happier than an Author who depends upon a Dedication, or a Ballad, for his daily Food.

Thou must not imagine, my dear *Isaac*, from what I have just now said, that all Authors in *France* are miserable, and that none subsist by their Merit and Learning. The Moment a Writer distinguishes himself by some Talent, the Frowns of Fortune cannot reach him: I own that Riches don't flow upon him, but his Works will still afford him wherewithal to live decently. The Misery I speak of regards only bad Authors, who scribble for Bread; and who, disappointed in their Expectations, are generally reduced to a starving Condition: A few Pence which they squeeze from Bookfellers, help to keep Soul and Body together for a while, but sooner or later that Supply drops, and then it would be very happy for them, as I have already said, that they could be Shoemakers, or even Cobblers; as such, they would be exempted from the Misery under which they now sink.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*, may the God of our Fathers bless thee with Prosperity and all earthly Comforts.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



LETTER

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*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



LETTER





## LETTER LXII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE Care I take, my dear *Isaac*, to be acquainted with the Manners and Customs of the *French*, does not hinder me from applying, for several Hours every Day, to study. I'm assiduous to render perfect, or, at least, to improve the small Degree of Knowledge that I may have acquired, and to avoid every thing that may obscure the Clearness and Distinctness of it. I have laid down a Rule, and follow a Method, which will naturally conduct me to the Knowledge of Truth. I cannot help thinking that the over-strain'd Respect which Men pay to the Ancients, produces two dangerous Effects: In the first Place, it accustoms them to make no Use of their Understanding; and, by Degrees, incapacitates them to exercise their Talents. They who employ their whole Time in poring upon the Works of *Aristotle* and *Plato*, are less careful about reconciling the Opinions of those Philosophers with Truth, and of rejecting what they perceive to be contrary to it, than to acquire a thorough Knowledge of all their Maxims in general, with a View to embrace and defend them for no other Reason but that they have been advanced by those Ancients; which they esteem to be a sufficient Proof of their Evidence, according to that old Axiom, *Aristoteles dixit, ergo verum*, i. e. *Aristotle said it, and therefore true*.

Another

Another bad Consequence that sometimes attends the reading of the Ancients, is the Confusion of Ideas into which it throws the Readers who are at a Loss how to behave in a Study of that Kind. I own 'tis necessary to read the Ancients, but then we must meditate on what we read, and seriously reflect on their Sentiments; and though we may look upon the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors as great Men, yet we must consider them as Persons liable to human Frailties, and capable of being deceived: In that Case we may reap great Benefit by them; but when we're foolishly fond of an Author, for no other Reason but because he's one of the ancient Writers, and are satisfied when we know what his Sentiments were, without taking the Trouble, or thinking ourselves oblig'd to canvass them, our Weakness may be compared to that of a Man who prefers an old rusty Brass Medal to a modern Piece of Gold finely engraved and intrinsically valuable. Is there any thing so precious as Truth? and can all the Reputation which an Author may have acquired in two thousand Years outweigh Reason and Evidence?

The Generality of Commentators are apt to deify the Defects and Errors of the Ancients, because they imagine that the Praise bestowed on them partly recoils upon themselves, and because, according to them, an Author and a Commentator is but as one and the same Person. *In this View Self-love artfully acts its Part, and shares in the Glory to which it raises another* \*. But, what is still more singular, there are Commentators who lavish Encomiums upon their Authors, not because they esteem them, but in Compliance with Custom, which has made it fashionable; so that, if they should not launch out into hyperbolical Praises, both of the Book and its Author, they would be treated as Novices by the Fraternity.

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\* *Mallebranche's Search after Truth. Part II. Cap. IV. Pag. 200.*

There are three Sorts of Works which are so many Snares laid to intangle our Reason and Understanding, by prepossessing them with false Ideas, *viz. Commentaries, Journals, and Prefaces.*

As it would be extremely ridiculous for a Person to acquaint the Publick that he's at work upon a trifling Subject, the Commentators always take care to let it be known that they are explaining an admirable First-rate Author, of a most profound and penetrating Genius, who was the Admiration of his own and of subsequent Ages. But the Jest of all is, that the same Commentator, employ'd upon two Authors whose Opinions directly clash with one another, contradicts himself in every Article, and extolls the same Opinion which he had treated with Scorn.

The Journalists are directed by the Booksellers, their Employers, with regard to Encomiums, or Criticisms, on Books.

An Author endeavours, in a Preface, to impose upon his Reader, and to throw a Mist before his Eyes; so that there's scarce one to be met with which is not lame on the Side of Truth, or of good Sense.

Therefore, my dear *Isaac*, to judge aright of the Merits of any Book, whether ancient or modern, 'tis necessary, in my Opinion, to peruse it without Prejudice or Prepossession; first of all to put his Opinions to the Test of Reason, and next to examine if they are conformable to those of other great Men; to take a near View of the Passages which may appear obscure or doubtful, to reject those which are evidently false, and receive those chearfully which lead us to Truth, or that serve to fortify the Knowledge which we already had of it: By this Means only can we judge solidly of the Merit of any Performance; all other Proofs are either false or uncertain.

The

The Generality of Mankind are apt to judge of a Book from the Reputation of its Author: I own that the Character of a Writer adds not a little to our Prepossession in its Favour, but yet we must not wholly rely upon this as an infallible Proof. *Scot*, and many other scholastick Writers, acquir'd a surprizing Reputation in their own Times, but lost it afterwards; and are now hardly so much as known by some Monks. General Encomiums are not to be received as Vouchers for the Merit of any Performance, but in so far as they are founded upon Justice and Equity, and bestowed by Persons who have maturely reflected before they commenced Panegyrists.

The Sale of a Book is by no Means a Proof of its Goodness: For, as the Number of People who are taken up with trifling and childish Performances, is much greater than those who apply to serious Study, the *Rapsodies of Mr. des Accords* have been oftner printed than the Works of *Descartes*, or *Gassendi*; and the Poetry of *Father de Cerceau*, than the Poem of *St. Prosper*, by *M. de Saci*.

The Scarcity of a Book is no Addition to its Merit: The *Vaninis* are very scarce, and so are many other Books written by Libertines and Free-thinkers; whereas *Cicero*, *Quintilian*, and *Plato*, are very common. Shall it be therefore said, that these Authors are but indifferent, and in small Request? On the contrary, good Books are every where to be met with, and bad ones very seldom to be found; which a modern Author thus accounts for: "Good Books are often printed, and "bad ones but once or twice at most."

Prejudice, my dear *Isaac*, was carried to such a Height among the *French*, towards the End of the last Century, and in the Beginning of this, that if an Author was but an Ancient, he found a Crowd



of Sticklers who converted his greatest Defects into shining Beauties: On the other hand, several Persons were so far prepossess'd in favour of the Moderns, that they could find nothing elegant or good in the Ancients. Nothing but Folly, Madness, or gross Ignorance can drive People into such Excesses. There's a just Medium in Things: The Ancients had their Failings, but they had also great Beauties; and I may venture to say, that some of them are such as the Moderns could never pretend to come up to. This is the Footing, in my Opinion, upon which the Dispute about the Preference ought to be put.

*Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus*, and the other ancient Philosophers, were bad Naturalists compared to *Gassendi, Des-Cartes, Newton*, &c. and but indifferent Metaphysicians compared to *Locke* and *Mallebranche*. As to moral Philosophy, we can pretend no superior Knowledge; *Tully's Offices* sufficiently prove this. They were little better than meer Ignorants in Astronomy, Navigation, and Geometry; but have exceeded us in History: *Fra-Paolo, de Thou, Rapin Thoiras*, are short of that Perfection display'd in the Fragments left us of *Salust* and *Tacitus*; and must be allow'd to be inferior to *Titus Livy, Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*.

The Beauties of *Tasso, Milton, Voltaire*, yield to those of *Homer* and *Virgil*: 'Tis true, the Poems of the Ancients have their Blemishes, as well as the Moderns; but then they're generally so excellent and sublime, that certain Faults are scarce perceptible, or, at least, easily pardon'd\*. *Guarini's*

\* It must be allowed that *Homer* was guilty of egregious Blunders; but a Man must be very blind, or sadly prejudiced, not to perceive the ravishing Beauties. I could instance a Passage of the *Iliad*, of which I should rather chuse to have been the Author, than of all *La Motte's* Works, and, I dare venture to say, than (*Fontenelle* excepted) of all the Compositions of the Members of the French Academy; I mean such as it is in 1737.

*rini's Pastor Fido*, *Fontenelle's Eclogues*, and some of *Segaris's*, are perhaps preferable to the Works of *Theocritus*; but in those of *Virgil* they have Rivals, that counterbalance, and perhaps eclipse them.

The Tragedies of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* are extremely beautiful; but to one who pays not a blind Worship to the Ancients, they have neither the Brilliant, the Charms, the Softness, and the Sublime withal, which we find in *Corneille* and *Racine*. We have even *French* Poets that come very far short of those two illustrious Moderns, but who nevertheless may vie with the ancient *Greek* Tragedians. *Thomas Corneille's Ariana*, *Crebillon's Rhadamistus*, the three last Acts of *Voltaire's OEdipus*, and the same Author's *Brutus*, are perhaps as good as the *Electra* of *Euripides*, and the *OEdipus* of *Sophocles*. As to the *Latins*, their theatrical Pieces are detestable. It would seem that *Italy* could never produce a Genius capable of writing in the tragical Way with any sort of Success. *Seneca's* Pieces, still extant, are worse than *Pradon's*; and we should have been much more obliged to our Ancestors, if they had left us something else in their room.

The ancient and modern Comedies are pretty much upon a Level. *Aristophanes*, *Menander*, *Plautus*, *Terence*, are an equal Match to *Don Lopes de la Vega*, *Moliere*, and some good *English* Authors in that way; yet me-thinks, that were we to enter upon a strict and impartial Examination, the Preference might perhaps be determined in favour of the Moderns.

In these latter Times several Authors have composed very fine Elegies, and Pieces of Gallantry: And in this way of writing the Countess of *Suzanne* has distinguish'd herself; but her Performances are not within Sight of *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*. The *Greeks* and *Romans* carried the Ode to a De-

gree of Perfection, which their Posterity has not as yet arriv'd at. There's no Comparison between *Pindar*, *Horace* and *Anacreon*, and *Malherbe*, *Roussseau* and *La Motte*; not but the latter have many Beauties, particularly *Roussseau*, who set out in such a Manner as to flatter the Sticklers for the Moderns with Hopes of seeing him some time or other equal to *Horace*: But it seems that the same Sentence which blasted his Reputation, extinguish'd his Genius; for since his Banishment from *France*, his Performances are only adapted to the Vivacity and Penetration of the *Brabanders*; and his *Muse*, in high Favour at *Brussels*, is actually hiss'd at all over *Europe*, by every Man who has the least Knowledge of *French* Poetry.

As for Eloquence, the Ancients are by much our Superiors. *Bossuet*, *Flequier*, *Patru*, *Le Maitre*, *Bourdaloue*, had neither the Strength, the Fire, nor the Sublime of *Sophocles*; nor have they attain'd to the Majesty, Grandeur and Dignity of *Cicero*. Modern *Italy* has furnish'd no Orator of any Note: The Preachers are rather Scaramouches, Pantalons and Harlequins, who divert their Audience with Clenches and Puns, than Men that endeavour to touch the Heart, and to ravish the Minds of their Hearers by their Eloquence.

Unless we be partial, my dear *Isaac*, this is all that can be said upon the Dispute between the Ancients and Moderns; and every learned Man who judges according to his Reason, and is not bias'd by the Prejudices of Education, will be of the same Opinion. The Regents in Colleges commonly inspire their Scholars with the utmost Disdain for Authors whose Works are not of fifteen hundred Years Standing; that was the Time when Men had the Freedom of thinking, but since that Period they have not been allowed to make use of their Understanding. Young People accustom themselves,

selves, by Degrees, to receive these Sentiments as indisputable Opinions, and which ought not to be so much as examin'd. They never throw their Eyes upon Books that are cried down; and when they attain to a certain Age, their Prejudices are so strong, that, in reading the Moderns, their whole Study is to find out Blemishes in those very beautiful Passages that strike them. How many Persons are charm'd with the Poetry, and noble daring Thoughts of *Voltaire*, and yet condemn his *Henriade*, without allowing themselves to distinguish the Beauties from the Defects; and this upon no other account but that they fancy a Modern is not capable of composing a good Epic Poem! But I would gladly ask them, if they thought that Men, in ancient Times, had two Heads, two Souls, two Understandings, four Hands, and four Feet? If so, then surely none of the Moderns can ever be upon any Equality with the Ancients. But if they had but one Soul and one Understanding, as we have, I question not but there may still be found as bright a Genius as that of *Virgil*, unless he that form'd it had notified that hereafter he would produce no Men who should attain to that Perfection.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; may Heaven grant thee Health and Wealth, and then thou'lt be content and happy. Write me as soon as possible.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



LETTER





## LETTER LXIII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I Have now, my dear *Monceca*, been six Days in *Naples*; but before I entertain thee with the Observations I have already made in this City, allow me to tell thee what I saw as I pass'd at *Loretto*. The *Nazarenes* pretend, that the Temple of that City was brought thither by Angels. According to their Account, 'twas originally a House in a Village of *Nazareth* in *Judea*, which was first transported into *Dalmatia*, and set down upon a Mountain called *Jersolto*, where it remain'd some time, and from thence was carried off by the same Angels, and placed in a Forest bordering upon *Ancona*. At length, after two or three Trips more, it settled its Residence for good and all in the Place where it now stands; and, to prevent its galloping about for the future, they have built a magnificent Temple, in the Middle of which it is inclosed.

The Priests who minister in this Temple pretend, that the House is built of unknown Stones: But I must tell thee, that having narrowly examined them, I plainly perceived that they were Bricks, and a grey reddish Sort of Stones, not at all uncommon; and so ill joined together, that one could easily see the Mason-work had been rear'd up in a Hurry. People flock to *Loretto* from all Parts of the World, all the *Nazarene* Papists having as great a Regard for this Place as we have for *Jerusalem*; and some Years the Number of Pilgrims assembled  
here

here in *Easter* Holy-days amount to near two hundred thousand, including both Sexes. Diversion and Pleasure have as great a Share as Devotion in the Travels of the greatest Part of those male and female Pilgrims; for all over *Italy* they make Parties for *Loretto* as for a Ball. The Societies and Fellowships of Men and Women, fantastically dress'd, repair thither in Crowds; and when the Journey is long and tiresome, they come mounted upon Asses reputed to be an Odour of Sanctity, as the Camel that brought the *Alcoran* to *Mecca*. They are endowed with the Talent and Gift of *never stumbling*, and are of a tractable Disposition like their Brother Species; but then they exceed them much in Judgment: So that the wise Animal may be left to the Liberty of its own Will, without the least Apprehension of its going out of the Road.

The principal Ceremony that the Pilgrims perform when they arrive, consists in making a Tour round the Temple upon their Knees; and a strange Shew it is. I can compare it to nothing, my dear *Aaron*, which may give thee a better Idea of the Thing, than to imagine to thyself thou wert to see two or three hundred School-boys hopping about upon one Leg one after another, and when one tumbles, the next behind falls over him: Just so it happens to the Pilgrims of *Loretto*. The Dispute is, who shall creep closest to the Wall of the Temple, so that some going one Way, and others meeting them, they often jostle, and the Ceremony seldom ends without some Kicks and Cuffs.

Thou'lt perhaps ask my Opinion, how and when this Structure was built? I cannot easily answer such a Question; but I can with Certainty assure thee, that this pretended Miracle, happening in the Pontificate of one *Boniface*, a cunning, subtle, double, dissembling Man, capable of executing the boldest Designs, and extremely covetous, 'tis highly probable

probable that in one Night several Workmen may have rear'd up this Building, brought, as they pretend, from *Nazareth*, and which is but a single Room, very small and low. And what makes this Conjecture the more probable is, that there was then no Habitation within a League of the Place where the Temple of *Loretto* now stands. At the Time when the Story of the sudden Arrival of this House was trump'd up, the *Nazarenes* were so far plung'd in gross Ignorance and Superstition, that they would have implicitly believed Things more contrary to Reason. But I doubt much if such a Miracle would take now a-Days, or at least I'm pretty much persuaded, that it would gain but small Credit except in *Italy*.

So much, my dear *Monceca*, for *Loretto*; 'tis Time now to return to *Naples*, where I have already seen a great many fine Things. This City has been so often ravag'd, that most of its Antiquities have been destroyed or damaged: We have still however the Remains of an Amphitheatre, and two or three Frontispieces of ancient Temples, which are as Embellishments to new ones, built on the Ruins of the others.

*Naples* is one of the largest and finest Cities of *Europe*, and even seems to have the Advantage of *Rome*, *London*, *Paris* and *Venice*: 'Tis every where regular and beautiful; whereas the other Cities have many low, ill-built Houses, and disagreeable to view, intermix'd with their fine Palaces.

The *Neapolitans* have the Reputation of being the most wicked and profligate People in *Europe*. There was a Time when a couple of Crowns was the Price of a Man's Life; and then there were above three thousand *Bandittis* in the Kingdom, who had the Impudence to oppose the regular Troops: And 'twas not without great Difficulty that the Race of them was extirpated. But at length the *Spaniards*,  
and,

and after them, the *Germans*, have almost entirely rid the Kingdom of those Wretches. They put a great many of them to Death, and intimidated others so much, that they have been forced to take to another Way of Life.

The *Neapolitans* formerly were much taken with the *Spaniards*, but abhor'd the *French*, and hated the *Germans*; and it would now seem that they had partly alter'd their Way of thinking. Since the late War it appears so to be, and at present it may be said, that they still abhor the *French*, love the *Germans*, and hate the *Spaniards*. This is pretty much the Taste of all *Italy*; and I can't imagine how the *Germans* have acquired the Esteem of this Country. I conceive very well why a *German* Officer is better look'd upon by an *Italian* than a *French* Officer; the former, without Ceremony, drinks his Landlord's Wine, and takes the best Room in his House; the latter is easy about his Lodging and Drink, is full of Complaisance, but fully bent upon debauching his Wife or his Daughter, which is a capital Crime among the *Italians*. They have not the same Cause of Hatred to the *Spaniards*; their Humours are pretty much of a Piece, equally Bigots and Slaves to the Monks, and zealous Servants to the Holy Office. 'Tis surprising that they should relish the Severity of the *Germans*, who keep them under great Subjection and Restraint.

If there be few People in *Italy* so wicked as the *Neapolitans*, there are scarce any so ignorant and stupid. They seem to make no other Use of Reason, but to sweeten their Crimes; and when there's no bad Action in Play, they're little better than meer Brutes. This gross Ignorance prevails even among People of Distinction, and 'tis surprising to see how shallow they are. They can tell you how many Churches there are in *Naples*, on what Day  
such



such a Saint's Festival is to be celebrated, the Streets through which the Processions pass, and what Coffee-houses People mostly frequent: So far and no further does their Knowledge reach. By a Question of a *Neapolitan* Nobleman to a *French* Man the other Day in one of those Coffee-houses, thou'lt be able to judge of the profound Knowledge of the Peers of that Kingdom: He ask'd very seriously, if the Harbour of *Paris* was as commodious and good as that of *Naples*, and if the King's Ships rode in it? I would fain think that all the Noblemen are not such Blockheads; but in general there's nothing so ignorant as a *Neapolitan* Nobleman.

The greatest Part of the Grandees of the Country make *Rome* the Place of their usual Residence: They take a Trip every Year to *Naples*, where they remain some Time, and thereafter return. They judge right in thinking *Rome* a more agreeable Place of Residence, for there's no Comparison between the two Cities.

The Magnificence of the Temples at *Naples*, is not to be express'd: There's nothing to be seen but Marble, Porphyry, Gold, Silver, Brass, and magnificent Paintings; and *Rome* can boast of none that exceed them, if we except *St. Peter's* Church. One of the most magnificent was built, as the *Nazarenes* pretend, upon account of a remarkable Miracle; for in *Naples*, as in other Parts of *Italy*, nothing is done without the immediate Concurrence and Assistance of the Saints: They tell us then, that the Devil, in the Shape of a Hog, took some Turns regularly every Day in the Place where this Temple is built, and so affrighted the Inhabitants that they deserted the City. This hoggish Devil keep'd a strange Racket, he knew better things than to throw up the Ground with his Snout; his Business was with Men, and particularly those who were not liberal in their Charities to the Mendicant

dicant Friars, whom he attack'd with great Fury, and brought them within an Inch of their Lives. A certain *Pomponius*, at that Time Pontiff of *Naples*, consulted a She Saint whom he highly revered : She ordered him to build a Temple for her in the very Place where the Hog play'd his Pranks, and the Moment the first Foundation-stone of this Edifice was laid the Devil decamp'd, and was no more seen. The Pontiff caus'd make a Brazen Hog, which is kept in the Vestry of his Temple, as a Memorial of so notable a Miracle.

There are several other Things in this City as extraordinary and surprising as what I have just now mention'd. In a Convent of Monks they shew us a Picture in which is represented the *Divinity*, in a serious Conversation with one *Thomas d'Aquinas* : But these are but Trifles compared to what happens here every Year in the principal Temple, which they call *Cathedral*. The Blood of a certain Man named *Januarius*, kept close in a Bottle, falls a boiling the Moment that 'tis brought near the Shrine in which his Body lies. When the Miracle does not operate directly, and that they're obliged to present the Bottle several Times at the Shrine, the People are under a terrible Consternation, and apprehensive of dreadful Events ; and should Mr. *Januarius* take it into his Head not to cause the Blood boil, it might perhaps occasion some strange Revolution in the City : But, to prevent such Inconveniencies, the Vice-roys of *Naples* strictly command the Priests to take care that the Miracle shall have its due Operation ; and plainly tell them, that they shall be answerable for its Success. Some Years ago, the Blood not bubbling so soon as usual, the People ran about the Streets like a Parcel of Madmen ; but at length the Miracle wrought, and all was calm.

Is it not lamentable, my dear *Monceca*, that Ignorance and Stupidity should lead Men into such absurd Chimeras, and that the Vulgar should be so terribly imposed upon by the hellish Contrivances of Cheats and Rogues? What would the *Nazarenes* say of us, should we give into such Extravagancies? How ridiculous would their Authors make us, and what Quantities of Paper would be employ'd in exposing our Folly? "Ye Simpletons, *would they say*, " what a low Part do you make the *Divinity* act? " has he occasion to manifest himself by such Mum-  
 " meries: Look but up to Heaven, and there view  
 " that glorious Orb of Heat and Light, the Sun  
 " rolling in the wide Expanse with rapid and di-  
 " urnal Race. These are the noble Effects of al-  
 " mighty Power, and worthy of its Grandeur.  
 " Have you forgot that, by his Law, he has for-  
 " bid you to make to yourselves the *Likeness* of  
 " any thing in Heaven above, or upon the Earth be-  
 " neath, or in the Waters under the Earth? For  
 " Shame then, destroy your Vial, with the Image  
 " to whom you attribute the boiling of the Blood!  
 " Remember, that the God of your Fathers even  
 " punished the Children for the Crimes of their  
 " Parents." Such would be the Language of the  
*Nazarenes*: But what they do themselves is always  
 laudable and virtuous. Infallibility falls to their  
 Share, and to ours Confusion and Error.

May thou be bless'd, my dear *Monceca*, with un-  
 interrupted Health; and may I have often the Plea-  
 sure to hear from thee.

*Naples*, \*\*\*\*\*



LETTER



## LETTER LXIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

A Poet, whom I have often mentioned to thee, has just now enrich'd the Stage with a new Tragedy, beautiful, moving, well conducted, the Poetry excellent, and the Sentiments every where noble and bold: But, before I enter upon the Reflections that I have made on the Subject of this Piece, it will be necessary to pave the Way with a short Account of the Author's Character, which will probably make thee relish them the better.

*Voltaire*, so he is call'd, is endowed with a lively, penetrating and bold Genius, an excellent Versifier, and a better Philosopher than many of his Brethren; a Man of Honour, affable and smooth in Company, but so prepossess'd with the Regard which is due to a Man of Wit, that a truly learned Man rises much higher in his Esteem, than the Man of Quality, who has no other Merit but his empty Titles. The small Account that he has sometimes made of Persons of the first Rank, has rais'd up dangerous Enemies against him. His Pen is so bold, and strikes at Superstition so openly, that the Monks, their Emissaries, and those who don't love him, publish all over *Europe* that he has no Religion; and yet all his Works display a Spirit of Candour and Humanity, which evidently proves a thorough Conviction of the Existence of a God, who is good, just, and sovereignly powerful:



And even some Pieces, for which they inveigh against him most bitterly, though he absolutely refuses to have had any Hand in them, abound every where with Praises; which Gratitude and Duty call upon all Mankind to ascribe to the *Divinity*.

What's most surprising in this Country is, the Madness of fathering Books and Writings upon Authors, without Proofs, and which they absolutely disown. Thou would'st be strangely mistaken to fancy that in *France* an Author is only accountable for his own Performances; he's answerable not only for them, but of all that the Publick and his Enemies are pleas'd to ascribe to him. Twenty Authors have been condemn'd by the Vulgar for Pieces that they had no Concern in. But what will still surprise thee more is, the Rage that possesses certain little mean pitiful Authors, the very Excrements of *Parnassus*, against those whose Merit and Learning have distinguish'd them. They overrun the Town with a Deluge of Satyrs, condemn the best of Books without Fear or Wit, launch out into scurrilous Invectives in Coffee-houses, and other publick Places; and, by meer Dint of Clamour, the credulous Publick is sometimes wrought up to a Belief of their Aspersions. Like to the Ravens who, by their croaking, silence the harmonious Nightingale, or drown its Melody.

One of *Voltaire's* most inveterate Calumniators is a Monster spew'd up from Hell, for the Punishment of Authors who have acquired any Reputation, and profess'd themselves to be Men of Honour. *Rousseau*, so is this Brother of *Alecto* nam'd, from his Quiver of Calumny drove the poison'd Arrows at every Man of Merit; and though he was the declared Enemy of all Mankind, the chief Objects of his Rage were those whom he thought the most worthy of Esteem. So many Crimes made him at length odious to all *France*; and the Government

Government judg'd, that it was the Interest of the State to crush such a Monster of Wickedness: Accordingly he was condemn'd by a Sentence of the Parliament of *Paris*, and by his Flight escap'd hanging, the just Punishment of his Crimes. He wander'd long from Kingdom to Kingdom; and, upon account of his Genius and Talent for Poetry, was at first well received by all who knew not his Character: But, like *Æsop's* Adder, he stung the very Benefactors who had rescued him from Misery. At last, fatigu'd with Crimes, though not satiated, he restrain'd for some Time the Fury of his invenom'd Quill; but soon after gave a Loose to it, and, from his Retreat, rail'd at all good Authors, whom he hated the more upon account of his Banishment.

This Man, my dear *Isacc*, was one of *Voltaire's* principal Adversaries, and thou may'st judge by him of the rest.

But I now come to *Voltaire's* Tragedy of *Alzira*, a Piece which appears to me to be conducted with great Art and Learning. The Attention of the Audience is kept in Suspence, and still egg'd on to the very last Scene; and the fifth Act presents us with very moving Situations. I shall endeavour to give thee an Idea of the Piece, and of the Characters of the chief Actors.

*Alvares*, Governor of *Peru*, opens the Scene, by declaring to his Son *Gusman* the Grant which he had obtained from the Council of *Spain* to resign his Employment, and to instal him in it; and acquaints him how an *American* Youth had generously sav'd his Life in an Engagement, for which he now intreats him (as new Governor) to release some Prisoners taken in a Battle since. *Don Gusman* seems not to relish his Father's Proposal, and is mighty unwilling to follow his Advice. By their Conversation in the first Scene the Father and the

Son are perfectly characterised, and the Audience fully let into the Subject of the Piece. *Gusman*, proud, haughty and cruel, begs of his Father, mild, sweet-temper'd and compassionate, that, as a Recompence of his pardoning the Prisoners at his Request, he would be pleas'd to make *Alzira* (Daughter to *Monteza* Sovereign of a Part of *Potosi*, and whom he designed to marry) favourable to his Wishes. In the same Act we are inform'd by *Alzira* herself, that her Marriage with *Zamor*, an *American* Prince, whom she dearly lov'd, was concluded; and that she was just going to be united to him, when the cruel *Gusman* separated her from her Lover. In the Recital of her Misfortunes to her Father, interceeding for *Gusman*, the Audience is not only inform'd what they were, but also of her Change of Religion, brought into her Discourse naturally, and without Affectation; so that in the first Scenes the Subject is fully clear'd up. *Zamor*, thought to be dead, is found to be one of the unknown Prisoners releas'd; he meets with *Alzira* coming from the Altar, where she had been plighting an eternal Faith to *Gusman*, who surprises them together. This brave *American* thought it beneath his Courage to conceal his Name and Birth, and *Gusman*, mad with Rage and Jealousy, resolves he shall die, but *Alvares* his Father opposes that Resolution; and by an Accident which has a charming Effect in the Minds of the Audience, this same *Zamor* proves to be the very *American* who sav'd the Governor's Life: Jealousy and Love rendering *Gusman* deaf to his Father's Intreaties, *Zamor* was order'd to Prison. *Alzira*, trembling for her Lover, bribes one of his Guards, who undertakes to conduct him safe out of the Town; but scarce is *Zamor* at Liberty, when he takes the Opportunity to sacrifice the cruel *Gusman* surrounded with his Guards. He is immediately seiz'd, and condemn'd

to die, with *Alzira*, suspected to have been in the Plot of her Husband's Murder, though in reality innocent: But when these unhappy Lovers were every Minute expecting Death, *Gusman*, who was not yet dead of the Wound he had received from *Zamor*, lays hold of the last Moments of his Life to make full Reparation for all his pass'd Cruelties and Barbarities, by a most noble and generous Act of Clemency.

This is, in few Words, my dear *Monceca*, the Subject of the Piece. I shall now say something about the Characters of the Actors.

*Alvares* is a downright honest Man, full of Candour and Humanity, zealous for his Religion, but not subject to that blind Rage to which they give the Name of *Piety*.

*Gusman* is high-spirited, vain, haughty, magnificent, cruel, such, in short, as the *Spaniards* who conquer'd *Mexico* are represented to be. Entirely influenced by the pernicious Maxims of those who set up for Converters, 'tis all one to him which way People are made Christians, if the Thing's but done.

*Monteza* is a new Convert from a Conviction of the Goodness of the Religion which he has embraced; but his Daughter, wedded to her old Prejudices, owes all her Virtue to herself, and Religion has no Share in her Actions.

*Zamor* is highly zealous for his Gods, a faithful Lover, form'd by pure Nature, humane to all Men in general, irreconcilable to his Enemies, full of Valour, and capable of executing the boldest Designs.

These different Characters are carried on with great Art, and embellish'd with many beautiful Incidents. *Alvares*, in giving the first Idea of his own Character, at the same time informs the Audience of the *Spanish* Cruelties.

*Ab!*



*Ah! Dieu nous envoyoit, par un contraire Choix,  
 Pour annoncer son Nom, pour faire aimer ses Loix:  
 Et nous, de ces Climats Destructeurs implacables;  
 Nous, & d'Or & de Sang toujours insatiables;  
 Deserteurs de ses Loix qu'ill falloit enseigner,  
 Nous egorgeons ce Peuple, au lieu de le gagner.  
 Par nous tout est en Sang, tout, est en Poudre;  
 Et nous n'avons du Ciel imité que la Foudre.  
 Notre Nom, je l'avoue, inspire la Terreur:  
 Les Espagnols sont craints; mais, ils sont en Horreur.  
 Fleaux du nouveau Monde, injustes, vains, avarés,  
 Nous Seuls en ce Climat nous Sommis les Barbares.  
 L'Americain, farouche en sa Simplicité  
 Nous egale en Courage, & nous passe en Bonté.*

Are we made Captains in our Maker's Cause,  
 O'er these new Christians call'd to stretch his Name?  
 His peaceful Name! and shall we unprovok'd,  
 Bear Murders which our holy Cheats presume  
 To mispronounce his injur'd Altar's Due?  
 Shall we dispeople Realms, and kill to save?  
 Such of the Fruits of *Spain's* religious Care,  
 I from the distant Bounds of our old World  
 Have to the new one, stretch'd a Saviour's Name  
 To make it hateful to one half the Globe,  
 Because no Mercy grac'd the other's Zeal!  
 No, my misguided *Carlos*, the broad Eye  
 Of our Creator takes in all Mankind:  
 His Laws expand the Heart; and we, who thus  
 Wou'd, by Destruction, propagate Belief,  
 And mix, with Blood, and Gold, Religion's Growth,  
 Stamp in these honest *Indians* Breasts a Scorn  
 Of all we teach, from what they see we do.  
 Our Priests are all for Vengeance, Force and Fire;  
 And only in his Thunder, act their God.  
 Hence we seem Thieves; and what we seem, we are:  
*Spain* has robb'd every Growth of this new World,  
 Even

Even to its savage Nature! — Vain, unjust,  
Proud, cruel, covetous; we, we alone,  
Are the Barbarians here! — An *Indian* Heart  
Equals, in Courage, the most prompt of ours;  
But in Simplicity of artless Truth,  
And every honest, native Warmth, excells us.

I know not, my dear *Isaac*, if in these Lines  
thou perceivest that all the Characters of the Piece  
are fairly display'd: That of *Alvares* is visible in  
the Pity which reigns in his Discourse, when he  
draws the Picture of the *Spaniards* and *Americans*.  
'Tis easy to perceive that this Passage is a Stroak  
of a very masterly Hand; and here's another not  
at all inferior. *Alzira*, speaking to her Father,  
draws her own Picture.

*Mes Yeux n'ont jusqu'ici rien vu que par vos Yeux :  
Mon Cœur, changé par vous, abandonna ses Dieux.  
Je ne regrette point leur Grandeurs terassées,  
Devant ce Dieu nouveau, comme nous, abaissées.  
Mais vous, qui m'assurés, dans mes Troubles cruels,  
Que la Paix habitoit aux Pieds de ses Autels ;  
Que sa Loi, sa Morale, & consolante, & pure,  
De mes Sens desolez gueriroit la Blessure ;  
Vous trompiés ma Foiblesse ; un Trait, toujours Vain-  
queur,  
Dans le Sein de ce Dieu vient déchirer mon Cœur.  
Il y porte une Image a jamais renaisante :  
Zamore vit encore au Cœur de son Amante.*

Whate'er I see, is with my Father's Eyes ;  
Whate'er I love, is for my Father's Sake ;  
I chang'd my very Gods, and took my Father's.  
Yet has this Father, piously severe,  
Wrong'd my believing Weakness, and undone me.  
He told me, to compose my troubled Heart,  
Peace held her Dwelling at the Altar's Foot :

He

He told me, that Religion cur'd Despair,  
 And soften'd every Pang that pierc'd the Soul.  
 But ah! 'twas all Deceit! all dear Delusion!  
 Mix'd with the Image of an awful God,  
 A human Image struggles in my Heart,  
 And checks my willing Virtue in its rising:  
*Zamor*, tho' dead to Nature, lives to Love;  
*Zamor* still triumphs in *Alzira's* Heart,  
 Lord of her Soul, and holds back all her Wishes.

This Trouble and Conflict, so well express'd by *Alzira*, perfectly denote the Situation of a Heart, which owes its Change only to paternal Respect, and has not that Faith in the new Deity, which its Favours and Rewards deserve. Whatever Singularity there may be in *Alzira's* Character, yet 'tis admirably supported, and full of lively, bright Sentiments, which the Novelty of the Subject has furnish'd: Such is that Passage where the Author makes *Alzira* draw a Parallel between the *Spanish* and *American* Ladies.

*Par ce grand Changement dans ton Ame inhumaine,  
 Par un Effort si beau, tu vas changer la mienne.  
 Tu t'assures ma Foi, mon Respect, mon Retour,  
 Tous mes Vœux, s'il en est qui tiennent lieu d'Amour.  
 Pardonne — Je m'égare — Approuve mon Courage.  
 Peut-être un Espagnole eut promis d'avantage:  
 Elle eut pu prodiguer les Charms de ses Pleurs.  
 Je n'ai point leurs Attrait, & je n'ai point leurs  
 Mœurs:*

*Ce Cœur simple, & forme des Mains de la Nature,  
 En voulant t'adoveir, redouble ton Injure:  
 Mais, enfin, c'est a toi d'essayer désormais  
 Sur ce Cœur indompté la Force des Bienfaits.*

Who knows, did such a Change endear your Breast,  
 How far the pleasing Force might soften mine?

Your

Your Right secures you my Respect and Faith :  
 — Strive for my Love ; — strive for whatever else  
 May charm, — if ought there is can charm like  
 Love.

— Forgive me ; I shall be betray'd by Fear  
 To promise, till I over-charge my Power. —  
 Yet — try what Changes Gratitude can make :  
 A *Spanish* Wife, perhaps, would promise more  
 Profuse in Charms ; and, prodigal of Tears,  
 Would promise all Things, — and forget 'em all.  
 But I have weaker Charms, and simpler Arts ;  
 Guile — less of Soul, and left as Nature form'd me,  
 I err, in honest Innocence of Aim,  
 And, seeking to compose, inflame you more.  
 All I can add, is this : ——— Unlovely Force  
 Shall never bow me to reward Constraint ;  
 But — to what Lengths I may be led by Benefits,  
 'Tis in your Power to try, not mine to tell.

I must say that I found this Passage charming ;  
 the uncultivated and natural Plainness that accom-  
 panies all *Alzira's* Requests, and the Contempt she  
 expresses of the Dissimulation of the *European* La-  
 dies, strike the Mind, and make it relish Manners,  
 though imperfectly known, yet affecting by their  
 Singularity. I could wish that a Poet would al-  
 ways make it his Business to find out a Subject  
 which might furnish him with new Ideas. *Voltaire*  
 has found the Secret to put a thousand delicate and  
 lively Things in *Alzira's* Mouth. In her Doubts  
 about the Truth of the Religion which she has em-  
 brac'd, in six Lines she explains what the Learned  
 have scarce been able to do in large Volumes.

*Grand Dieu ! condui Zamore au milieu des Deserts.  
 Ne serois-tu le Dieu, que d'un autre Univers ?  
 Les seuls Europeens sont-ils nez pour te plaire ?  
 Es tu tiran d'un Monde, & de l'autre le Pere ?*

*Les*



*Les Vainqueurs, les Vaincus, tous les Foibles humains,  
Sont-ils également l'Ouvrage de tes Mains?*

Yet — be the Wanderer's Guide amidst his Defarts!  
Greatly dispense thy Good, with equal Hand;  
Nor, partial to the Partial, give *Spain* all.  
Thou can'st not be confin'd to Care of Parts;  
Headless of one World, and the other's Father:  
Vanquish'd, and Victors, are alike to thee.

A ridiculous Bigot exclaims against such noble moving Passages, and brands the Author with Manichean Principles. Poor Simpleton! who does not conceive that the Beauty of one Character is rais'd by the Imperfections of another, and that *Alzira's* Doubts give a shining Lustre to *Monteza's* settled Faith.

I shall now end my Extract of this Piece with a Passage that deserves to be engrav'd in golden Letters, that Sovereigns should never lose Sight of, that Inquisitors, Persecutors, and other Monsters of human Nature, ought seriously to ponder, and that all Mankind ought to follow.

*Mais renoncer aux Dieux, que l'on croit dans son  
Cœur,*

*C'est le Crime d'un Lache, & non pas une Erreur.  
C'est trahir a la Fois, sous un Masque hypocrite,  
Et le Dieu qu'on prefere, & le Dieu que l'on quitte.  
C'est menter au Ciel meme, a l'Univers, a soi  
Mourons; mais en mourant, sois digne encor de moi.*

Had I renounc'd my Gods, yet still believ'd them;  
That — had not been an Error, but a Crime:  
That had been mocking Heav'n's whole Host at  
once;

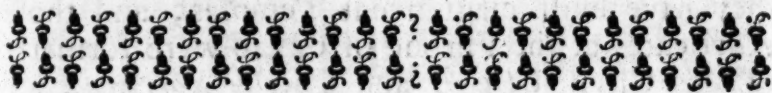
The Powers I quitted, and the Power I chose.  
A Change like that had err'd, beyond the Tongue,  
And

And taught the silent fervile Soul to lie.  
 I could have wish'd that Heav'n had lent thee Light;  
 But since it did not, — let thy Virtue guide thee,  
 And in thy Death let me deplore thy Loss.

What Mischiefs, what Crimes, might Men have  
 escap'd, had they but been convinced of these Prin-  
 ciples? and what unjust spilling of Blood might  
 have been prevented?

Take care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*; may  
 the God of our Fathers enlighten thy Heart and  
 Mind, load thee with all sorts of good Things,  
 and bless thee with a numerous Family.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXV.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I LEFT *Naples* about a Fortnight ago, and shall  
 make the best of my Way for *Switzerland*, after  
 some Days Stay at *Milan*, where I now am, and  
 where I have already seen several Things worthy  
 of a Stranger's Notice. This City is large and  
 well built. The *French* and *Piedmontese*, who are  
 to be Masters of it yet a while, are not at all in Fa-  
 vour with the Inhabitants. The jealous Husbands  
 long for the happy Moment when the *Imperialists*  
 shall deliver them from those troublesome Gallants.

Since the *French* were their Masters, the Price of  
 Wine is much diminish'd, and the Number of Chil-  
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*Les Vainqueurs, les Vaincus, tous les Foibles humains,  
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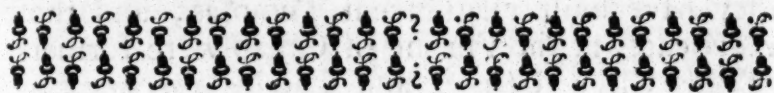
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bands, who were without Issue, and imputed this Misfortune to the Sterility of their Consorts, are now dignified with the agreeable Title of *Father*. The Bigots attribute this happy Multiplication to the Intercessions of *Charles Borromeo*; and the Astrologers pretend that 'tis owing to the happy Influences of the Stars\*: But our jealous-pated Husbands will swear to you, that the *French* have contributed more than all the Saints and celestial Globes; for which Reason they're under great Impatience for the Return of the *Germans*, and I'm persuaded, that upon their Arrival a Day will be set apart for a publick Thanksgiving to their favourite Saints.

The *Milanese*, as well as the other *Italians*, have powerful Protectors in the celestial Court, to whom they have built magnificent Temples; and those Advocates at the Throne of Grace were formerly of this City. *Clou* †, and *Charles Borromeo*, are the most distinguish'd. On the Festival of the former, his Shrine is expos'd on the great Altar of the *Capola*, and Crowds of People from all Parts come and prostrate themselves before it; particularly those who are possess'd with the Devil, are sure to be there, where they make a roaring Noise, and commit a thousand Extravagancies; and may be said, if I may use the Expression, to be a second Edition of the *Paris Convulsionaries*. The Manner of their Cure is pretty commical: A Priest takes, very solemnly, some of the Flowers that adorn the Saint's Shrine and throws at them; the Devils, stupified with

\* The *Milan Almanack* is in great Esteem.

† This wants to be explain'd. *Jacob Brito* hearing People talk at *Milan* of St. *Clou*, believ'd that such a Saint there really had been formerly: But this *Clou* is only a large Piece of Iron, which Avarice has sanctified under Pretence of its being one of the Nails which fasten'd our Saviour to the Cross. There are fifty three such in *Europe*, and every Church that has one is positive that what they have is original, and all the rest counterfeit.

with the Fragrancy of the sanctified Pinks and Violets, are directly soften'd into such a mild and complaisant Temper, that they talk very reasonably and familiarly with the Priests. Nothing can be more entertaining to a Philosopher than to be a Spectator of those Scenes; and all the Enthusiasts of the *Delphian* Priestess are but a Jest to them. Among the Possess'd who are annual Performers, some of the most eminent in the Trade are taught several Words of different Languages. An excellent Piece of Priest-craft this; for the People are strangely surpris'd to hear a Peasant talk in a Language which he never learn'd. Some time ago a *Nazarene* Doctor, who was interrogating a Man possess'd, forgot the Questions which he ought to have ask'd him; and instead of his own Lesson, examin'd him on what was another's Part, who, understanding the Watch-word, fancied that he address'd himself to him, and answer'd for his Comerade. This Mistake put the Doctor a little out of Countenance, but he soon recover'd himself, and the Blunder was only observ'd by Persons who knew the Cheat of these infernal Comedies.

The *Milanese* are as superstitious as their Neighbours, but they adjust their Devotion to their Pleasures. As the Holy-days and Festivals of the Saints procure them Abundance of Diversion, they make as many of them as possible; and they're particularly agreeable to the Fair Sex, the Monks, the Gallants, the Musicians, and Lemonade Sellers.

The Carnival at *Milan* is almost as gay and brisk as at *Venice*; nothing but Joy and Jollity to be seen: And even the Nuns, in their terrible Prisons, during this merry Season, suspend their Austerities, and, instead of their Liturgies and Litanies, act Plays amongst themselves in proper Harlequin and Scaramouche Dresses; so that Sister *Dorothy*, as well as Sister *Angelica*, are then metamorphos'd

into Buffoons and Merry-Andrews. From *Christmas* till *Lent* the Convents are crowded with all sorts of People gazing through the Gates at those female Comedians, who acquit themselves wonderfully, and often act their Parts better than those who make the Stage their Trade.

The Monks are nothing behind with the Nuns in Masquerading, and they also act Farces publicly in their Convents. The Father Prior acts *Le bon-homme Jean Broche*, i. e. *Cuckold John the Turnspit*. The young Novices act the Parts of *Angelica* and *Spineta* to Admiration; and the very Lay-brothers must share in the publick Diversions. These Monks extend their Art still farther, and shew away in private Houses; so that a Collation will procure any Afternoon, while the Carnaval lasts, a Play acted by the *Franciscan* or *Augustinian* Companies; and you may even pick and chuse among all the different Monastick Orders.

Besides these extraordinary Actors, there are several others dispers'd up and down the City, whose Trade is the Stage at all Times. The chief Theatre is for the Opera, which is magnificent, and the Decorations sumptuous. The *Milanese* have an uncommon Way of applauding the Actors and Actresses: They compose Sonnets, or get some hireling Poetaster to make them, and, when a Virtuoso or a Virtuosa has sung well, these printed Sonnets come flying from all Quarters to the Stage, and are stuff'd with Encomiums on the Actor; so that, were we to take their Word for't, *Julius Cesar*, *Tamercane*, and *Mahomet II.* are but meer Tom-boys compar'd to Seigniors *Scalpi*, *Farlini*, *Senesini*, and other Half-men, who have paid dear for a clear Pipe. The *English* have another Way of applauding, which the Actors like much better; instead of Verses they throw Purfes full of Guineas, and these Gentlemen, Virtuoso's, are not so fond of Glory as to prefer Sonnets



Sonnets to good clinking Gold: They must, however, put up with them in *Italy*, because they cannot better do; for no *Milanese* will be persuaded to applaud in the *English* Manner.

Few Nobility are so stingy as those of this Country. With a View to save and to divert themselves at a cheap Rate, they have found the Secret to cause a Society of Burghers and Merchants (whom they call *Faquini*, because they open the Carnival dressed like Peasants) furnish all the Expences of publick Diversions. The Nobles lend their Palaces for the *Faquini*'s Balls and Entertainments, but bear no Part in the Expence; and there's more than one of them who would hire their Houses for those Occasions, could it be but privately done so as not to be known.

Next to *Naples* *Milan* is famous both for the Certainty and Cheapness of Assassinations. The *Germans* and the *French*, 'tis true, have done all that they could to discourage this Commerce; yet there are still People to be found, who, for a Pistol, will dispatch your Enemy. When the Execution is attended with Difficulties or Delays, to cut short, they wait near some Church for the Person whom they intend to murder; and, after the Fact is committed, retire very composedly into the same Church, which is their Sanctuary.

I have examin'd, my dear *Monceca*, from whence could proceed that Immunity granted to the Temples in many different Religions; and after seriously considering what might be the Motives of such a Custom, I found none other but the Ambition of the Priests. Among the *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, and the *Israelites*, our Forefathers, those who had the Conduct of the divine Worship, had no less Ambition than the modern Clergy: They imagin'd that it must gain them the Respect of private Men by having a Sanctuary for the Misfortunate, not distinguishing



betwixt Crimes and Disasters; so the Assassin found himself in Safety in the Temple, as well as he who had kill'd involuntarily. The *Nazarene* Monks retain'd this Custom in the Countries where their Power was absolute, and therefore granted to their Churches and Monastries the same Privileges which the Palaces of Sovereigns and Embassadors were intitled to; but the Rights which they have assum'd to themselves are become hurtful to civil Society, by the Use that they have made of them: The most atrocious have found a Refuge among them; whereas the Princes, who may grant Immunities, only protect Persons whose Crimes are pardonable, and not inconsistent with the Character of a Man of Honour. There's certainly no Embassador but who would have rather caus'd secure *Cartouche*, than to have shelter'd him; but this notorious Robber would have found in the least Chapel of *Italy* a safe Place of Retirement. What! my dear *Monsecca*, shall Altars, where the Deity is worship'd, protect Crimes? Is it not absurd to build Temples to the Almighty for no other End but that they may serve for Retreats and Sanctuaries to Villains? What Cruelty is couch'd under that Superstition which authorises Crimes? How happy are the *Nazarene* Nations who have not given into such Abuses, and who punish Crimes even in the Sanctuary?

*Milan* is furnish'd with as good and as operative Relicks as any Town in *Italy*. Those of *Charles Borromeo* are the most remarkable; they are preserv'd in a Coffin made of Rock Chrystal, join'd together by Plates of Silver gilt. The Body of this *Nazarene* is still to be seen entire through the Chrystal, except his Nose, which all the Pains taken in embalming, have not been able to preserve from Corruption. I ask'd a Monk the Reason of this, and he told me very gravely, that God had

had permitted this Miracle, because the Saint had been too fond of sweet Odours, and that the Loss of one Half of his Nose was the Punishment of his Sensuality. If the *Divinity* were thus to put a Mark on all the Failings of the *Nazarene* Saints, I scarce believe there would be a Tongue to be seen in any canoniz'd Monk's Mouth; for 'tis well known that their darling Crimes were Gluttony and Lying.

Had the *Jews*, my dear *Monceca*, any Taste for Relicks, we might find at *Milan* what would be very proper for our Synagogues, such as *Moses's* Rod preserv'd in the Cathedral; and tho' there's no absolute Proof that 'tis the very same which the Prophet made use of, there being another to be seen at *Rome* in *St. John de Latran's* Church, yet the best Way not to be mistaken, would be to buy them both, or piously to suppose that our Legislator had two Rods, a Thing not at all impossible. When People are curious to have Relicks of such Antiquity, they must not be over nice about Trifles, but have an implicit Faith as the *Nazarenes*, and take Things in the Lump; for should we strictly examine what is said about *Moses's* Rod, we should be no less puzzled than they. The Rabby *Abarbanel* has composed a long Dissertation upon this Rod, stuff'd with many idle Notions; and at last assures us, very magisterially, that *Moses* carried it to the Mountain where he died, and that it was put into the Tomb with him. I could wish that this Rabby would be so kind as to acquaint us who reveal'd this Fact to him; till then I think we may safely purchase the two which the *Nazarenes* have, and, should a third appear, 'tis but buying that too.

There is also, in another Church\*, a Relick of much greater Consequence, viz. the Serpent which

\* In the Vestry of *St. Ambrose's* Church.

which *Moses* set up in the Desert; and though it be not double, as in the Case of the Rod, yet, whatever the *Nazarenes* may pretend, I doubt much if it was set up in that Prophet's Days; and am apt to think that it was a Memorial of some extraordinary Event, as the Goose of the Capitol, and therefore I would advise our Synagogues to have nothing to do with this Piece of Antiquity, which I rather take to be *Roman* than *Egyptian*. This famous Serpent is of Brass, and placed upon a Marble Pillar.

To what Lengths, my dear *Monceca*, is the Blindness of Men carried! Let us rather pity than despise them. Folly and Weakness are inherent to human Nature; happy they whom Heaven has distinguish'd from others by a Superiority in Knowledge.

Farewel, my Friend, thou shalt hear from me as soon I get into *Switzerland*; in the mean time I wish thee Health and Happiness.

*Milan, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXVI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

**I** MAKE no doubt but that, by this Time, thou art got to *Egypt*, and therefore I direct this Letter for thee at that Place. Our Friend *Jacob Brito* is upon his Departure from *Italy*, and designs to go for *Switzerland*. He has made very curious Remarks

marks in his Travels, which he has been so good as to communicate to me. I hope that thou'lt be equally communicative, and favour both him and me with what remarkable or curious Things thou shalt see in *Egypt*.

I went Yesterday to the Supreme Court of Judicature, which they call *Parliament*, and heard the Pleadings of two of the most celebrated Barristers of the Kingdom. I must own, that in their Speeches I could not but admire the Purity, Laconism and Elegancy of their Stile, and, with the Audience, join in applauding two such able Lawyers: Yet, if we compare the *French* Orators to your *Cicero's* and *Demosthenes's*, we shall find that their Merit is much inferior to that of the Ancients; they have neither the Grandeur, the Sublime of their Genius, nor the Fire of Imagination. I enquir'd into the Cause of this Difference; and being fully convinced that it did not proceed from the Impossibility of finding Men who might match *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, since Nature had not forgot how she framed their Brains, I concluded that the Advantage was owing to Situation, and to the Subjects of which they treated.

There are Subjects which, of themselves, furnish the Mind with grand, sublime and magnificent Ideas, and which have no Occasion for an artful Contrivance of Phrases, or the Harmony of Words to raise the Mind; the plainest Terms sufficiently express them. As for Instance, when we speak of the Diety, the Understanding is wrapp'd up in Admiration, and seems to soar above its Reach; then the most familiar and common Diction, if it be but plain, distinct, and clearly conveys the Ideas, is sufficient to give Energy to the Discourse, and to render the plainest Eloquence sublime. We have in the Book of *Genesis* a decisive Proof of this Truth, where God says, *Let there be Light:*

and



*and there was Light* \*. In these Expressions, acknowledged to be sublime by the very Pagans, the Obedience of the Thing created seems to conform to the Will of the Creator in the Twinkling of an Eye. What noble Ideas rise from such simple Terms? *The Power of God, the Creation of Light, its Existence by a single Word, and the Universe bless'd in the Enjoyment of it by the Goodness of an immense and omnipotent Being.* Any thing of Affectation or nice Turns of Expression would have but spoil'd the sublime Simplicity of this Passage.

If it must be allowed that the Subject is of vast Service to the Orator, and can, in some measure, render him eloquent without the Help of Art, the true Reason why the Ancients were superior to the Moderns is plainly discover'd by this, without going further to seek for it.

A Counsellor in the Parliament of *Paris* has a noble Task upon his Hands when he pleads for the Fortune or Estate of a private Man, particularly if his Client be a Person of Distinction; in which Case all the Eloquence and Art that he is Master of are display'd in his Pleadings: But whatever Cause he may defend, should we strip it of its Ornaments, what remains would make but a slight Impression upon the Minds of the Audience, neither captivating their Attention, nor raising their Imagination to any uncommon or extraordinary Height. On the contrary, what Mind can help being struck, when an Orator declares that he pleads for the Fortune of a King? The Beginning of *Cicero's* Oration for King *Dejotarus*, and the whole Exordium of the said Pleading, a Master-piece of Eloquence, owes more of its Beauty to the Dignity of the Subject than to the Assistance of Art.

Let a Barrister tell his Audience, in the most moving and sublime Terms, that he pleads for a  
*Frenchman,*

\* Gen. Cap. I. Ver. 3.

*Frenchman*, the constant But of Fortune's Malice, a Victim to the Caprice of Destiny, whose Virtues must put even his Persecutors to the Blush; and, were he to interest Heaven and Earth in the Decree which is to decide his Client's Fate, he may, by harmonious Terms, and the flowing Cadence of his Phrases, charm the Ear, but he will never fix the Mind, nor raise it to that Degree as another who simply says, *I plead for the Fortune of a King*, &c. There's a natural Sublimity in these Words, and more than twenty Ideas presented by them to the Understanding; they express the Grandeur of the Subject treated of, they present to the Mind a King, who is the Judge of others, acting upon the defensive; and, in short, influence it in favour of the Person attack'd, by the Grandeur and Dignity of his Rank. How lofty soever may be the Exordium of the Oration to *Dejotarus*, it perhaps cost *Cicero* less Pains than the Preamble of that which he made for *Archias*; but in the first he pleaded for a King, and in the second for a Poet. The Beginning of his first *Catiline* Oration is acknowledged, by every-body, to be a consummate Piece of Eloquence: I allow it; but what was the Occasion of the Orator's famous rhetorical Flourish? No less than the Destruction of a Republick, Mistress of the World, which a Rebel was ready to undertake.

The Dignity of the Subjects treated of, often determining the Degree of the Orator's Eloquence, we must not be surpris'd to find Passages in *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* more striking and engaging than what we meet with in the Moderns; they had neither a greater Share of Learning nor of Wit than the latter, but they wrote upon Subjects rich in themselves, and which naturally led to the sublime. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that *Cicero*, in his ordinary Pleadings, is not superior

rior to *Patru* and *Errard*; and that, if the latter had liv'd at *Rome*, they would have been nothing inferior to him.

The King's Council, or the Advocates-General in the Parliaments, have it more in their Power to reap Advantages from the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, than simple Barristers; for they are sometimes employ'd in Causes of Consequence and Importance to the Good of the State, and may, in their Discourses and Remonstrances, speak with a Dignity near a-kin to the *Roman* Grandeur: But their Genius, not train'd up to the grand, is infeebled by a Number of trifling Niceties and insignificant Formalities. 'Tis with the *French* Magistrates as with the scholastick Philosophers; take them from their Common-place Maxims, and they're lost: Were it not for *Aristotle*, a Regent of Philosophy is apt to imagine, that the Light of Nature only serves to misguide us; and the greatest Part of the Gown-men dare not so much as think of any thing that's not to be found in *Cujas*, *Moulin* and *Argentrè*.

The Freedom of Thinking was, among the Ancients, one of the principal Causes of their Eloquence. The *Greeks* and *Romans* did not lay such Stress upon the Authority of others, as on the Reasons which carried Conviction along with them. There are not so many Quotations in all the Pleadings of *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, as in the first Page of those of *le Maitre*. What do'st signify that a Doctor, a Father of the Church, or a Lawyer, maintain'd such an Opinion? If it be contrary to Reason, or the Good of the Publick, it ought to be as much rejected as that of a Fool and an Ignorant.

To justify the Failings of certain Men is Madness. They are Praise-worthy for what is good in them, but to deify their Defects is ridiculous Idolatry.

What!

What! because *du Moulin* and *d'Argentrè* are not agreed about certain Questions, must not I pretend to determine in what I think is clear and evident? Must I spend whole Years before I come to a Resolution? Such a laborious and unnecessary Enquiry fatigues the Mind, and exhausts its Vivacity and Force.

The *English* take a surer Way to arrive at Knowledge. Truth alone is the Compass by which they steer; and neither the Authority of the ancient or modern Authors can prevail with them to lay aside their Reason: They judge of Things by their own, and not by other Mens, Notions. The Liberty of the *English* Nation may also contribute much to the Assistance of those who apply themselves to Eloquence. A Speaker in the House of Commons, who harangues for the Good and Welfare of his Country, who informs the Sovereign of the Necessities of the Subjects, and who renews the Assurances of the mutual Alliance and reciprocal Contract betwixt the Prince and People, treats no doubt of Matters no less important than the Subjects in which the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators employ'd their Talents: For which Reason it is no extraordinary Thing that the *English* should exceed the *French* in Eloquence; and Ambition itself lends a helping Hand. An able Counsellor at *Paris* gains perhaps five or six hundred thousand Livers at most in his whole Lifetime; but let him be ever so eloquent, his Science and Talents are no otherwise recompenc'd but by his daily usual Fees: Whereas in *England* many Honours are the Reward of Genius. An able Orator may be chosen as the Advocate of his Country, and his Eloquence paves the Way to a Rank which Merit alone can arrive at. If the Employments of *President au Mortier* in *France* were bestowed on Counsellors who distinguish'd themselves, the Bar would certainly



make a better Figure than it does. The Ambition of attaining to the first Offices of the Magistracy would be a Spur to the Study of Eloquence; and the Barrister, when he came to think that he was born for great Employments, would of consequence form higher and more noble Ideas.

The Orators, as others of the Learn'd, are liable to the Failing of making Money rather than Glory the Mark at which they aim. I have known many Authors who, when I told them that some of their Works appear'd to me to be uncorrect, answer'd me thus; "What would you have us to do? The Bookfellers only allow us half a Pistole a Sheet. What can be done that's good at that Price? The Case is the same with the Lawyers. We have but ten Pistoles for a Pleading, *say they*; shall we toil and moil for such a Trifle? We plead as we are paid, and proportion our Ware to the Money we receive."

As the Case then stands, 'tis impossible that an Orator in *France* can apply himself to perfect his Art, and to get Money at the same time; he must either chuse to remain poor, or to produce but imperfect Pieces. 'Tis impossible to manage all the Causes which the greatest Part of the Advocates undertake; for one pleads often more in a Year than *Cicero* and *Demosthenes* did in the whole Course of their Lives.

Eloquence has been carried to a higher Pitch in the Pulpit than at the Bar. The Preachers, Panegyrist, and Composers of funeral Orations, were either in eminent Posts, or expected that their Merit would bring them to Promotion: So that they rather studied how to please, than to scrape up Money; and to cultivate their Talents was their sole Study. Besides, they had another Advantage over the Orators at the Bar: All their Subjects furnish'd them with such copious and sublime Mat-

ter

ter, that the bare Contemplation was sufficient to elevate the Mind. Is any thing more grand and majestick than the Explication of the Divine Orders and Decrees? Any thing that affects or engages Men more than the principal Rules of Morality, and the fundamental Points of their Religion? *Bourdalone, Bossuet, Flechier*, &c. have attain'd to greater Perfection in their Way than *Patru, le Maitre* and *Errard*; and yet they were not more eloquent than the latter, but their Subjects more vast and extensive; and they had all the Time that was necessary to render their Works perfect: But the Case is not the same with Lawyers. *Patru*, who prefer'd Glory to Riches, and esteem'd Reputation to be the best Recompence, dress'd up a certain Number of Pleadings with great Care; but had not the Generosity of a Poet supported him against the Injuries of Fortune, he must have liv'd and died a Beggar \*.

What a shameful Thing was it to the *French* that such a Man as *Patru* should be almost starv'd, while *Chapelain*, and many other bad Authors, had considerable Pensions!

This, my dear *Isaac*, is a glaring Instance of the Prejudices and bad Taste that sometimes prevail in the most polite and discerning Ages. That of *Lewis XIV.* was fertile in Wits: This Monarch rewarded them like a generous magnificent Prince, but almost forgot one of the greatest Men which his Kingdom produced, while he loaded the worst of Poets with his Favours †.

I 2

Farewel,

\* Mr. *Patru*, being under great Straits, resolv'd to sell his Library. *Boileau*, inform'd of this learned Man's Indigency and Resolution, bought the Library, but would never take the Books till *Patru* was dead.

† *Chapelain* had considerable Pensions allowed him to his dying Day.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac* ; live content and happy, and let me hear oftner from thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LXVII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

THE Nuns at *Paris*, my dear *Brito*, are much more regular than those of *Venice* ; not that their State is more agreeable to them, but because they are held under a Constraint that forces them to be virtuous, and supports their Chastity, not otherwise strong enough to withstand the Temptations, to which cloister'd Ladies at *Venice* are, by their Liberty, expos'd, and most commonly yield. The Nunneries in this Country are Prisons full of innocent Victims, sacrificed to Avarice or Ambition ; and the *French*, endow'd with Tendernefs and Compassion for the Unfortunate, keep up to that Character in every Thing, except the cruel Use which they make of those Convents.

A large Half of the Fathers at *Paris* are as barbarous to their Daughters, as a certain People of *Peru*, who make Concubines of all the Women taken in War, and feed the Children they have by them with all possible Delicacy, till they are thirteen Years of Age, after which they kill and eat them. \*

The *French* do, pretty nigh, the same Thing. When they have three or four Daughters, the eldest,  
or

\* The History of the *Incas*, Lib. I. Cap. XII.

or she who is the Favourite, is directly provided with a Husband, and all the rest are shut up into a close Prison, who, from the Moment of their Birth, are decreed to suffer the worst of Torments. " 'Tis my Opinion, says *Montagne*, That there's less Cruelty in eating a dead Man, than when he's alive." I agree with him in this Sentiment, and must freely own, that I would sooner pardon a Father for killing his Child the Moment of its Birth, than to nurse it to a certain Age in order to make it completely wretched: For such is really the Case with most of the Nuns. And this I can attest from my own proper Knowledge, having been several Times in Convents with the Chevalier *de Maisin*, who made me acquainted with two or three Kinwomen of his, doom'd to this unhappy Fate as long as they live.

" You are far from being so unhappy as you imagine, *said I*, to one of those Nuns, retir'd from the Noise of a tumultuous World; your Life glides gently along, you have no Family-cares to disturb your Peace: And, in short, you enjoy the three Things which render Happiness complete, *viz.* Virtue, Health, and the Necessaries of Life. You are under a Mistake, *replied she*; I have none of these three Things. My Virtue is the Effect of Force, not of Choice; so that Constraint, which causes no Change in my Inclinations, rather hinders me from yielding to Temptations, than any real Hatred to Sin. Grates are the Guardians of my Chastity and Modesty, but still my Heart has soft Desires: Where's the Use then of a Virtue which cannot calm the Mind, and which is only such because it wants the Liberty of becoming Vice? My Health is long since impair'd. Melancholy, the Regret of being confin'd, without a Cause, and all Hopes for ever lost of being releas'd from



“ my Prison, have corrupted my Blood. Sinking  
 “ of Spirits, and horrible Head-aches, haunt me  
 “ Day and Night; and there’s scarce a Winter  
 “ but my Physicians tell me I can’t see another  
 “ Spring: By what Chance their Predictions prove  
 “ false I know not. ’Tis true, I have the Neces-  
 “ saries of Life, but can the Nourishment of the  
 “ Body make one happy, while the Mind drinks  
 “ nothing but bitter Draughts? Besides, what  
 “ Plagues, what Torments, must I not undergo  
 “ to purchase my daily Bread? Night and Day  
 “ must I be ready to obey the Call of a Bell; and  
 “ I have often scarce shut my Eyes, when I must  
 “ jump out of Bed, in the silent and dark Hours  
 “ of Night and Rest to other Mortals, and run to  
 “ Mattins, where, for a long Hour, I mumble  
 “ over some *Latin* Psalms, which are *Greek* and  
 “ *Hebrew* to me; and in three or four Hours after  
 “ I have got to Bed again, I must return to the  
 “ Offices. So that my whole Life is spent in re-  
 “ citing my Breviary, and in hearing the dull non-  
 “ sensical Exhortations of our Superior, an old,  
 “ fantastical, peevish, crabbed and superstitious  
 “ Creature, like all old Women, who offers to  
 “ God the Torments which she makes me suffer\*.  
 “ After what I have now told you, (*continued*  
 “ *this Nun*) can you imagine my State and Con-  
 “ dition of Life to be so serene and calm as you  
 “ fancy, or that I enjoy the three Things which  
 “ constitute supreme Felicity. I acknowledge,  
 “ *said I*, my Mistake in the Notion I had of it;  
 “ but let me beg Leave to ask, how you could take  
 “ on Vows that were to make you so unhappy?  
 “ In order to satisfy you in this Point, *replied she*,  
 “ it will be necessary to explain the Vocation of  
 “ three Fourths of the Nuns to the Monastick  
 “ State,

\* *Offre à Dieu les Tourmens qu’elle me fait souffrir. Boileau, Sat. X.*

“ State, to which they are call’d in the same Manner as I was.

“ No sooner was I arriv’d at the Age of six or seven, but my Mother, who had absolutely determin’d that a Convent should be my Fate, whipp’d me regularly twice a-day; the most trifling Fault was punish’d with the utmost Severity, and this Rigour continu’d till I was nine Years old. At length it was intimated to me, that I was to be put into a Convent, as a Boarder, under the Inspection of one of my Aunts, a Nun, and who was appriz’d of the State to which I was design’d. The Monastery, for the two first Months, was a Paradise to me: My Mother’s Slaps o’th’ Face, and Boxes on the Ears, were converted into Sugar-plumbs and Sweat-meats from my Aunt; no more Correction, no more Chiding, nothing but Dears and Jewels, and *What do’s my Child want?* So that I bless’d the happy Moment which brought me within the Grate. Sometimes my Mother took me out to go and dine with her; but these were Days of Sorrow and Affliction, for, what with Cuffing and Chiding, I still return’d in Tears to my Aunt, who caress’d and comforted me. At last, when I was arriv’d at my sixteenth Year, I was told that it was now Time to determine whether I would return to my Mother, or turn Nun. You may easily judge that I did not hesitate to declare that I was for the Veil. My Mother at first appear’d to be displeas’d with my Design, and rejected my Proposal; but, after great Entreaties to do a Thing which she heartily wish’d for, and was resolved should be, her Consent was obtain’d; but with this proviso, that I should take a short Trial of the World and Company at her House, that I might be well assured of my Call to a religious Life, which was

“ not

“ not inconsiderately to be undertaken : Accord-  
 “ ingly I was carried home, where I remain’d  
 “ fifteen Days ; a Term by much too long to  
 “ confirm me in my Resolution. By Six every  
 “ Morning I was order’d to get up, and for three  
 “ or four Hours my Locks were pull’d and tore by  
 “ a cursed Milliner, under pretext of dressing my  
 “ Head as became a young Lady of my Rank. I  
 “ was laced into Stays so strait that I could scarce  
 “ draw my Breath ; and this my Mother told me  
 “ was necessary for a Girl who receiv’d or went  
 “ into Company. She carried me to some As-  
 “ semblies of old Matrons, where I sat like a  
 “ Statue for five or six Hours together.

“ At length the happy Day came, on which I had  
 “ the Liberty of chusing either the World or a Con-  
 “ vent. I threw by my Stays, pull’d off my gaudy  
 “ Dress, sent that cursed Jade of a Milliner a-  
 “ packing, and went joyfully to my Aunt. What  
 “ a Happiness is it, *said I to her*, to get rid of  
 “ that Constraint which so many Women are pas-  
 “ sionately fond of ! How ! is this then the World  
 “ from which they say some People are sorry to  
 “ be separated ? To be sure they must be depriv’d  
 “ of common Sense, or know very little about it.

“ Such were my Sentiments when I solemnly  
 “ vow’d to make this House my perpetual Prison :  
 “ The first Years went calmly on, but when I  
 “ came to the Age of nineteen or twenty, I be-  
 “ gan to smell a Rat, and to perceive that I had  
 “ been deluded. The People whom I saw in the  
 “ Parlour, contributed not a little to open my  
 “ Eyes ; my Heart felt Motions which it could  
 “ not resist. The amorous Songs of the feather’d  
 “ Kind, the Sight of Men, my Looking-glass,  
 “ and, more than all, my Heart told me that I  
 “ was not fram’d to be an useless Member of  
 “ Society, and to deprive myself of those Enjoy-  
 “ ments

“ ments which are the Privilege and Happiness of  
“ human Nature: But, alas! such Reflections  
“ only served to augment my Misery. I endeavour’d,  
“ at first, to dispel these melancholy  
“ Thoughts by reading; but the more my Mind  
“ was enlighten’d, the more my Heart was disturb’d.  
“ Romances were the Books that pleas’d  
“ me most; I por’d upon them Night and Day,  
“ and water’d the most moving and tender Passages  
“ with my Tears: A Lady of my Acquaintance was so kind  
“ as to furnish me with such Books, and I soon exhausted her Library. My  
“ Vexation for having abandon’d the World, and  
“ for being the unhappy Victim of the Ambition  
“ and Avarice of my Family, has render’d Life a  
“ Burthen to me; I only look for a Remedy in  
“ Death, which I wish for rather than fear. My  
“ Mother happens to be as unhappy as myself:  
“ She had made a Sacrifice of me, in order to  
“ procure a more advantageous Marriage for my  
“ eldest Sister, who died a few Days after the Celebration  
“ of her Nuptials; so that there’s no Child  
“ left but me, who cannot succeed, consequently  
“ the Estate must now go to a remote collateral  
“ Branch, hated by her, and not without just  
“ Ground. And is not this a visible Demonstration  
“ that Heaven revenges my Cause?”

I know not, my dear *Brito*, what thy Sentiments may be of this barbarous Custom among the *Nazarene* Papists, of confining their Daughters; but, in my Opinion, he must have had the Heart of a Cannibal who invented a Custom, which, under pretext of devoting Souls to God, involves great Numbers of innocent Persons into eternal Misery. I have often talk’d with the *Nazarenes* concerning this Practice, so contrary to Reason and the Laws of Nature. They endeavour to  
justify



justify it by political Reasons: "Were all the Girls to be married, *say they*, Families could not be supported in a suitable Rank, and they would be obliged to make unequal Matches." Poor, pitiful Reasoning! which has no other Foundation but the insipid Vanity of some Noblemen intoxicated with their Quality, as prejudicial as a Plague to the Good of Society. Let us take a View of the *English*, the *Swedes*, the *Prussians*, the *Danes*, and other Nations; are they less careful to preserve the Privileges of their Nobility, than the *French* or the *Spaniards*? No surely; but they take care not to be blindly led by old Prejudices.

If there were no Nuns in *France*, few Noblemen, 'tis true, could get Girls with an hundred thousand Crowns Fortune; but then they would not be obliged to give their Sisters equivalent Sums. If we look into Families in general, and examine the Increase and Decrease of Estates, by the receiving and giving out of Fortunes during the Course of a Century, we shall find no great Odds: Besides, what Advantage is it to the State that certain private Men possess immense Wealth? 'Tis rather contrary, than advantageous, to the publick Interest; for the dividing the Riches into just Proportions, is a Means to make a Kingdom the more flourishing.

Let us, my dear *Brito*, abandon the *Nazarenes* to their Blindness; for surely 'tis none of our Business, whom they so cruelly persecute, to endeavour to open their Eyes: But why should we wonder at their Behaviour to us, since they use their own Children with equal Cruelty? Thou would'st scarce believe what Numbers of Nunneries there are in *France*; every Town is full of them, and I fancy they are as numerous as those of the Monks.

May

May Heaven grant thee Peace and Plenty, with the Comfort of a numerous Family, which thou'lt dispose of to better Purpose than the *Nazarenes* do.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXVIII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

**T**IS now six Days since I arrived at *Geneva*, and my Stay in it has been longer than I intended. This City was formerly ill built, but of late Years a great Number of new Houses, and of a good Taste, have very much beautified it. The Fortifications of *Geneva* are good and regular: Men are constantly at work upon them; and the Burghers contribute chearfully towards the necessary Expences of finishing them, having renew'd the Tax, first laid on upon that Account, for ten Years longer \*.

This little Republick might have saved the immense Sums which these Fortifications have cost them. Their Alliance with *France* and the Protestant Cantons protected them against the Insults and Invasions of the *Savoyards*, their common Enemies, and whose Yoke they had formerly shaken off.

Two Reasons oblige *France* and the *Swiss* to protect *Geneva*; in the first Place, 'tis no doubt the Interest of the former to prevent the *Savoyards* and *Piedmontese* from extending their Dominion

on

\* This Letter was wrote before the late Troubles in *Geneva*.

on this Side the *Alps*; and next, 'tis no less the Interest of the Protestant Cantons to prevent the Destruction or subduing of a City which may be look'd upon as the Metropolis of the *Calvinist* Religion.

Religion therefore and State-policy finding their joint Accounts in the Protection of *Geneva*, I can't imagine what can induce them to fortify it so strongly, nor hinder myself from condemning their Conduct: For had it still remain'd in its former State, *France* would have had no Temptation to break the Alliance made with it; but who can tell whether hereafter she will not change her Mind. To give a Man, whose Heart is easily inflam'd, an Opportunity of gazing upon a beautiful Woman whom he may find Means to gain, is a dangerous Step. A Day perhaps may come, when the People of *Geneva* will repent their having dress'd out and adorn'd their City like a new Bride. Some King of *France* may happen to fall in Love with her, and even force her to an irregular Marriage. I know very well that the Protestant Cantons would oppose this Match, but perhaps they would not be able to hinder the Execution; and if once the Thing were done, it would be as difficult to wrest *Geneva* out of a *French* Monarch's Hands, as it was formerly for *Menelaus* to recover his beloved *Helena* from the *Trojans*. I have sometimes talk'd jestingly with several People of this Place about such a preposterous Marriage; but they told me they were under no Fears that way, since the Conquest of their City, in its most perfect State, would be no Equivalent to *France* for the Loss of its Alliance with the Protestant Cantons, nor for the Expences which the Reduction of it must cost.

The chief Trade of *Geneva* consists in Silks, Books, and other Merchandize, of which they send great Quantities into foreign Countries; but, what is pretty remarkable, few Books relating to the  
Protestant

Protestant Religion are printed in this City. They would find Difficulty to dispose of them, because of the Booksellers of *Holland* and *England*, who can more commodiously furnish the *Nazarene* Protestants, particularly the *French* Refugees, with such Books: So that at *Geneva* Printing-houses furnish rather all the *Spanish* and *Italian* Doctors; and *Sanchez*, *Escobar*, *Suarez*, *Molina*, *Bellarmin*, *Cajetano*, &c. are obliged to the Protestants for the Preservation of their Works, which the *Genevese* do not in the least change or mangle, even in the Books that are most opposite to their Religion.

This fair and honest way of Dealing is not so common among the *Nazarene* Papists: All the Writings that pass through their Hands are augmented or diminished as they find it may make for them. In the Infancy of Printing they added a Passage of twenty Lines in the History of *Josephus*, and afterwards were obliged to own the Uncertainty of it, no such thing being to be met with in most of the MSS.

The *Molinists* in the last Century publish'd several Editions of *Jansenius*, in which were the Propositions that had been condemned, and which in the former were not to be met with.

The Inhabitants of *Geneva* are generally lusty stout People, and are reckon'd sullen and inhospitable: But they don't deserve this Character, and may justly be said to exceed their Neighbours in Politeness and Affability. 'Tis true, that they're suspicious of Strangers who profess the *Romish* Religion; but have they not Reason to mistrust their most mortal Enemies, who have often attempted to lay Snares for them? They are extremely frugal and temperate, but affect a *Spanish* Gravity, which makes them often ridiculous.

A too violent Hatred of the *Popish* Religion is the general Failing of this little Republick: They



seem to indulge themselves in the Notions which are most contrary to it; and when the Conversation falls upon that Subject they turn meer Enthusiasts. I don't condemn them for rejecting a Religion which they think erroneous; but I would have them to act as Philosophers, by refuting the Error without hating the Person who has the Misfortune to be misled by it.

'Tis my Opinion, that we may look upon all Mankind as forming, in some sort, but one simple Religion, since they all adore the same Divinity, and only differ in point of Worship and Ceremonies. Happy they whose Rules and Precepts shorten the Way to Felicity! But, because they are more enlighten'd than others, and have the Advantage in the Means of Salvation, they ought rather to pity than despise those who take a round-about Way to Happiness.

I'm almost tempted, my dear *Brito*, to compare Heaven to a stately Palace, with four Gates answering to the four different Parts of the World. We may enter this magnificent Structure from the East, West, South and North; but there may be some Odds in the Goodness of the Roads. As for us *Jews*, we come from the East, in a Road which Heaven has made smooth; the *Nazarenes* march in the Western Road, rough and rugged; the *Turks* take the Northern Road, still worse; and all the Religions in the *Indies* and *America* walk in the fourth Road, dirty, and surrounded with Precipices: Though many lose themselves on this Road, yet still there are some who arrive at the celestial Palace notwithstanding the Difficulties of the Journey.

The *Nazarene* Papists, and our Rabbies, are against this Opinion: They think that God ought to have no Mercy on a Creature who has endeavour'd to serve him in another Religion. And 'tis no extraordinary Thing to find a Monk at *Rome*,  
who

who would rather chuse to deny the Being of a God, than to allow that some Protestants, who have lived up to the strictest Rules of Virtue, will be admitted into Heaven.

When an *Italian* finds any Difficulty in obtaining what he wants of his Family, he threatens them with a Journey to *Geneva*; *Me n'andero in Geneva*: And a Father would be no more affected were his Son to say, *I'll go to the Devil*. This Prepossession against the People of *Geneva*, whom the *Italians* look upon as Monsters spew'd out of Hell, proceeds from the want of being acquainted with their Manners and Customs, so pure and rational, that few Countries can come up to them: But the *Italians* are obstinately blind in their Decisions, and whoever is not of their Faith is a Prey to *Belzebub*.

The following Story of a *Piedmontese* Preacher (which looks a little fictitious, could I not assure thee that I was myself a Witness of the Fact) comes opportunely enough in here \*. He was preaching upon the Torments of Hell, and after he had reckon'd up all the Cauldrons, Pitch-forks, and Firebrands of that infernal Mansion, "My Brethren, *said he*, you'll perhaps be curious to know how " *Satan* musters the Damn'd in order to know their " Numbers: First of all, *Mahomet*, who is his " Drum-Major, is order'd to beat a Call; the " *Jews*, with the Rabbies at their Heads, first of " all file off, and as they pass along the Devils run " the great Iron Prongs into their Backsides; next " come the *Turks*, who are also prong'd in the " same manner as the *Jews*; then the *Hereticks* " dragging heavy Chains, the Devils pour melted " Lead into their Mouths as a Punishment of their " Blasphemies against the Saints, and particularly " *St. Julian* the Patron of this Church, whom you

K 2

" see

\* A small Village called *St. Julian*, about half a League from *Geneva*, in the Territory of *Savoy*.

“ see seated there in his Niche, and whom you don’t  
 “ respect as you ought ; for I found only six Livers  
 “ ten Sous last Week in his Box : And I can tell  
 “ you, my dear Brethren, that if you go on at this  
 “ Rate, melted Lead in Hell will become a dear  
 “ and scarce Commodity. Do you imagine, that  
 “ your Patron, St. *Julian*, can put up with your  
 “ disrespectful Behaviour ? If you do, I can tell  
 “ you, that you’ll find yourselves greatly mistaken ;  
 “ for my Part, I always take care to keep the Lamp  
 “ Brim-full of Oil, that he may not want Light :  
 “ But now that the Festival approaches, who will  
 “ cloath him ? Not I, truly ; I can’t afford it. If  
 “ you don’t see to it, I’m very sure we’ll soon see  
 “ him bare-ars’d ; and, to be sure, your Neigh-  
 “ bours in the Country about may very justly say  
 “ that you’re a Parcel of sad Dogs, thus to neglect  
 “ your Patron. You buy new Petticoats every o-  
 “ ther Day for your Wives ; and ’tis but ask and  
 “ have with them : You do very well in this. But  
 “ d’ye fancy, that when the melted Lead is pour’d  
 “ down your Throats, they’ll bring you a cooling  
 “ Glas of Lemonade ? You’ll then see your Folly,  
 “ and, I’m afraid, repent, too late, of having, by  
 “ your Negligence, deserv’d the Fate of *Hereticks*.  
 “ *Ob ! great St. Julian*, me-thinks I hear you say,  
 “ *Why did I not give you the Money that I paid*  
 “ *for Lace to our Kate ? Why was I such a Dunce,*  
 “ *as not to make you a Present of that Piece of Stuff*  
 “ *which I brought from the Fair ?* Vain Repent-  
 “ ance ! Fruitless Regrets ! St. *Julian* will laugh  
 “ at your Misery, and be deaf to your Cries : And  
 “ now’s the only Time to make him your Friend.  
 “ I understand that some of you complain of bad  
 “ Crops. *We have had no Wine this Year*, say  
 “ you ; *and two Years ago we had no Corn*. I  
 “ believe it very well, my Brethren ; but you may  
 “ expect much worse for the future. Do you think,

“ in good Earnest, that St. *Julian* will be such a  
 “ Simpleton, as to ask of God to grant a favour-  
 “ able Season to People who let him wear a Coat  
 “ for three long Years? You’re mistaken, my Bre-  
 “ thren; you’ll be treated like *Hereticks*, for whom  
 “ there’s no Salvation, and who in their Birth are  
 “ given over to the Devil: So that, when a *Cal-*  
 “ *vinist* or a *Lutheran* comes into the World, he’s  
 “ register’d in *Old Nick’s* Books, as his Goods and  
 “ Chattels.”

Such silly, low Discourse as this, render Instru-  
 ctions contemptible: The Temple, where the Will  
 of God is to be explain’d to Men, becomes a Stage  
 for Quacks and Mountebanks. ’Tis trifling to pre-  
 tend, that the Capacities of the common People,  
 being so confin’d and shallow, that Sermons, pro-  
 per for a learn’d Audience, would be lost upon  
 them. A plain and easy Moral may be express’d  
 without stuffing the Mind with a hundred ridiculous  
 Stories which Avarice has suggested. The new Coat  
 which the Preacher wanted for St. *Julian*, would  
 have very probably procured another for himself  
 into the Bargain. But shall a Priest, from the vile  
 Prospect of Gain, depart from the Character which  
 places him in a distinguish’d and honourable Rank?  
 Shall a Minister of God’s Word blend it with ri-  
 diculous Fables, which must be offensive to those  
 who are not of the *Nazarene* Faith, as well as to  
 the Professors of it.

I humbly conceive, that the Learning and Ca-  
 pacity of those who are authoris’d to preach cannot  
 be too carefully examin’d: For they direct the Un-  
 derstandings of the People, and may be consider’d  
 as the external Objects that produce Ideas in the  
 Minds of their Hearers, who have all their Know-  
 ledge and Light from them; and consequently it  
 must be of great Advantage to Society, that the



Notions which they give them be just, and agreeable to Reason.

Farewel, my dear *Monceca*; may thou be content and happy, and may I have the Pleasure to know that thou art so.

*Geneva.* \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER LXIX.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

THE Winds have been so favourable, that in nine Days I made my Passage from *Smyrna* to *Alexandria*. This City, so famous heretofore for the great Men it produced, for the Magnificence of its Buildings, and, above all, for the Glory of its Founder, is nothing now but a confused Heap of shapeless Ruins, Pillars, Chapiters, Bases, Pieces of Cornishes, either lying almost burried in Sand, or employ'd for quite different Uses from what the Ancients had design'd them. The Ruins of ancient *Alexandria* are not like those of ancient *Rome*, of which there are Fragments still remaining that retain a Part of their former Beauty: And what *Virgil* said of *Troy* after its Ruin \*, may be said of *Alexandria*. We see the Fields and the Place where this magnificent City was built; but the famous Watch-Tower (which the Ancients placed among the Seven Wonders of the World) built by Order of *Ptolmy Philadelphus*, under the Direction of *Sostratus Cnidian*, lies burried under Water, and scarce any

\* *Et campos ubi Troja fuit.* Virg. *Aeneid*, Lib. III,

any Vestige of it to be seen; only near these Ruins they have built a Tower, which serves for a Light-house to Ships in the Night.

This Work was rear'd up under *Mahometan* Princes, but comes not near to the Magnificence of the ancient Tower, of which the first Story was a House of vast Apartments of white Marble, and on it rose a square Tower of an extraordinary Height, built of the same Marble.

Before I enter upon a Description of the Ruins of ancient *Alexandria*, the Buildings of the new City, the Pyramids of *Cairo*, and the Antiquities of this Capital of *Egypt*, allow me to give thee a general Character of the Inhabitants of this Country, by comparing their Manners and Customs, as near as possibly I can, with those of the ancient *Egyptians*; and in doing this, I shall not only draw an Advantage to myself, but likewise satisfy thy Curiosity, by informing thee of many Particulars which have escaped the Curiosity of Travellers.

In *Egypt* was our Nation form'd: In this Country it grew and multiplied. Here the Promises which God made to *Abraham* began to have their Effect; and in this same Country were the first Miracles wrought by the Almighty for the Deliverance of his People from Slavery.

The Origin of the ancient *Egyptians* is altogether unknown to us; their *Dynasties* contain the fabulous History of sixteen or seventeen thousand Years. All Nations have been, or are, still guilty of the same Foible; or, more properly speaking, of the same Folly with them. The *Æthiopians* and the *Chinese* claim the Preference as to Antiquity. The *Nazarenes*, who are forced to fix the Creation of the World very near to the *Æra* of the *Hebrews*, would fain make us believe that they descend from ancient People: They cannot, 'tis true, go higher than the Deluge; but they invent  
Fables

Fables to prove their Origin from the Times immediately succeeding that Inundation. Some of the ancient *French* Poets and Historians made their Nation descend, in a direct Line, from *Astyanax*, *Hector's* Son. The *Egyptian Dynasties* being as fabulous as the pretended Origin of the *Trojans*, 'tis better fairly to own our Ignorance, how or when *Egypt* was peopled, than to look for Truth in a Number of Stories that have not the least Appearance of it.

The *Persians*, *Greeks*, *Romans*, *Arabians* and *Turks* have, in their Turns, subdued the ancient Inhabitants of *Egypt*, and settled in the Country; and the Descendants of the ancient *Egyptians* are now call'd *Coptes*: They are the true Natives of the Country, and their Number is but small compar'd to the Strangers. The *Roman* Civil Wars were the first Cause of *Egypt's* Ruin. The *Greek Nazarene* Emperors put many of the Inhabitants to Death, and persecuted others, upon account of the Heresy of *Dioscorus*, Patriarch of *Alexandria*, whose Doctrine the *Egyptian* Nation did formerly embrace, and do still profess. The *Arabian* and *Mahometan* Princes gave almost the finishing Blow to the ancient *Egyptians*; so that now the *Coptic* Language is no longer understood by the *Coptes* themselves, the last who knew it being dead some Years since.

All the Books and Writings in that Idiom are irrecoverably gone: Thus was the Knowledge of Hieroglyphicks formerly lost; and, without the Benefit of Printing, perhaps, the *Greek*, in process of Time, would have had the same Fate. The Number of *Turks* and *Jews* increases daily at *Constantinople*, and the *Greeks* visibly diminish. For a long Time pass'd the modern *Greek* Language has had little or no Resemblance with the ancient; and, by Degrees, all the People of the *Levant* will write in the *Turkish* Language: So that five hundred

hundred Years hence I believe the *Greek* Characters will scarcely be known but by some of the Learn'd among the *English, French, German* and *Dutch Nazarenes*; for, as the ancient Inhabitants of *Greece* have already left off speaking the ancient Language, they'll have no Occasion for them.

Besides the *Coptes*, there are two other Sort of Inhabitants in *Egypt*; the first go by the Designation of *Permanent Bedouins*, and the latter of *Wandering Bedouins*: The former live in Villages and Country-houses, and are to be considered as the Peasants of the Country. The Wanderers lead the same Life as the ancient Patriarchs; they live in Tents upon the Milk of their Cattle, and shift from Place to Place for the Benefit of Pasture: They're always careful to fix their Camp in Places where they can easily be furnished with Water; some near the Mountains, and others near to Places that are inhabited.

The *Turks* have a very great Regard for the *Wandering Bedouins*, and give them Lands to cultivate, that they may have no Quarrel with a People who have it in their Power to be mischievous, and whom they cannot hurt. They have no Occasion to be afraid of the *Turks*, because they can retire an hundred Leagues into the Deserts; where, by their Frugality, and Knowledge of the Wells, they can easily subsist: Their Baggage is no Incumbrance in their March; the Camels carry their Tents and Rush-Mats, which are their Furniture, Beds, Palaces and Temples. These People, my dear *Monceca*, are fonder of their rural Life, than the Courtiers are of the Pageantry and Bustle of a Court\*; with them 'tis still the Golden Age:  
Their

\* *Beatus ille, qui, procul negotijs,  
(Ut prisca gens mortalium)  
Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,  
Solutus omni sanore;*



Their Cattle not only furnish them with delicious Dishes, but also provide for their other Occasions. The Wool of their Sheep cloaths them; a Stuff is made of it which defends them from the Injuries of the Air; and they look upon those to be Madmen, who build huge Palaces and still think themselves straitly lodged. "Don't Perplexities and Cares dwell in those sumptuous Buildings? If Man has no more Satisfaction in them than we enjoy under our Tents, why should we take the Trouble to build them?"

Men, my dear *Monceca*, by building Towns, have render'd themselves Slaves to one another: They have been obliged to grant Titles to private Men, which are become the Chains to bind them. Those Bastions, Citadels, and Fortifications, are, by length of Time, become as prejudicial to the People, as they esteem'd them useful against Enemies. The Persons to whose Care those Forts were committed, have made them Means of absolute Power; and the first Men that lived in Towns, were the first Slaves.

The *Bedouins* have no Occasion to assemble the States General for the Preservation of their Liberty;

*Neque excitatur classico miles truci,  
Neque horret iratum mare,  
Forumque vitat, & superba civium  
Potentiorum limina.*

Hor. Epod. Lib. Ode II.

Thus translated by Mr. Creech:

Happy the Man beyond Pretence,  
(Such was the Sate of Innocence)  
That loose from Cares, from Business free.  
From griping Debts and Usury,  
Contented in an humble Fate,  
With his own Oxen ploughs his own Estate:  
No early Trumpet breaks his Ease,  
He doth not dread the angry Seas;  
He flies the Bar, from Noise retreats,  
And shuns the Nobles haughtry Seats.



berty ; there are no Factions, no Civil War among them : They every where find Pasture and Water, in which consist their most precious Treasures ; their Industry and Frugality furnish what else is necessary. They have no Disputes about Religion, no wrangling Doctors nor Divines. If the most zealous *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, often mentioned in thy Letters, had been born *Bedouins*, they would not have been disturb'd by the Fury of opposite Parties, ready to sacrifice one another. With these happy People, my dear *Monceca*, there's no Tent surrounded with Ditches, guarded by Soldiers, and set apart for State Prisoners. The *Bedouins* had never any Notion of rearing up Palaces to Revenge ; and were far from making it a Crime in their Brethren, to differ from them in Opinion : Every one might address the Deity in the *Turkish*, *Arabick*, *Persian*, and even in the *French* Language, if they thought proper.

An Enemy, let his Power be ever so great, could not, by the Favour of a *Bedouin*, obtain a Bit of Paper ordering a private Man to abandon his Tent, his Family, and his Flock, and to retire to the Confines of *Æthiopia*, there to remain till further Orders.

There's no such thing as a *Bedouin* Mufti going, escorted by Soldiers, from Tent to Tent, causing the People subscribe to a Confession of the *Mahometan* Faith, drawn up in a certain Form of Words, wherein consists all the Virtue of it.

Edicts, new Regulations, and the rising or falling of the Coin, are Things unknown to this People ; and never *Bedouin* went to Bed with an hundred thousand Crowns in his Coffers, who rose next Day not worth a Sous : His greatest Loss is perhaps a Sheep carried off by a Wolf in the Night-time ; he pays no Tax at his Birth, nor when he goes out of the World.

The

The happy *Bedouins* scarce ever heard of Attorneys, Counsellors, Solicitors, Jurisdictions inferior and sovereign. A Law-suit between two private Men never lasts above twenty four Hours; the oldest Man of the Tribe gives his Decision of the Matter in Debate directly, and without Fees: They cannot be brought to believe that a Cause should sometimes subsist undecided a hundred Years in *Nazarine* Families; and the *Turks*, in general, look upon such Talk as only invented to shew the Slowness of Justice. Yet, true it is, that some Differences are not accomodated in an Age. A *French* Merchant assured me at *Constantinople*, that he had a Law-suit depending in the Parliament of *Grenoble* no less than a hundred and twenty Years.

How ridiculous this, my dear *Monceca*, or rather what exorbitant Avarice? What! must the Determination of a Difference betwixt two Men take up more Time than their whole Lives? and shall not a hundred and twenty Years be sufficient to determine whether such an Estate belongs to *Jacob* or to *Isaac*? O happy *Bedouins*! who, still retaining the first Impressions of Nature, have not clouded their Reason by Customs so ridiculous.

I have often talk'd with *Nazarenes* about the long Continuance of their Law-suits; they endeavour to excuse the Slowness of Justice, by the Goodness and Wisdom of it when given. But, in order to judge an Affair with Prudence, must it require whole Ages? Must the same Law-suit be canvass'd by three or four Generations? and must the Judges, from Father to Son, leave to their Children certain Law-suits, the Fees whereof are a Part of the Revenue of the Family? To judge a Process with Equity, is it necessary to ruin the contending Parties, and to swallow up in Expences more than the Value of the Subject? The *Nazarenes*, my dear *Monceca*, offer nothing but  
vain

vain and trifling Excuses, when they pretend to vindicate the Defects and Slowness of their Courts of Justice by their equitable Proceedings. Their Painters draw Justice with a Balance in her Hands, but it often bends to the mony'd Side, at least many complain so. There's not a private Man but trembles if he's sued by a Nobleman, whose Interest is powerful; which is no great Sign that the People entertain a very favourable Opinion of the Integrity of their Judges. But the Case is otherwise with the Wandering *Bedouins*; he who has but an hundred Sheep, is sure to have as much Justice as another who has two thousand: And it seldom happens that, after Judgment, the Person condemn'd utters the least Complaint, or makes others afraid of risking a Trial when any Difference happens.

Farewel, my dear Friend; may the God of our Fathers grant thee Prosperity.

*Alexandria*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER LXX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THY Letter, my dear *Isaac*, was extremely agreeable; it contain'd solid and useful Reflections, the Continuation whereof, upon what thou findest in *Egypt* worthy of the Attention and Curiosity of a Philosopher, will be highly obliging. The Ruins of *Alexandria*, however scatter'd and burried they may lie, give still a grand Idea of the ancient Splendour of that City: Those Pieces of



Marble yet to be seen, those broken Chapiters, still offer something noble to the Imagination; and from those stately Ruins the Mind draws a Picture of the Magnificence and Grandeur of the Buildings when entire.

If *Paris* and most of the *French* Cities should happen to be destroy'd, five hundred Years after there would scarce remain the least Vestige of the most magnificent Structures; and this chiefly owing to their want of Marble, the only Stone that can resist the Shocks of Weather. There's not one Marble Pillar in all the publick Edifices at *Paris*; and *Versailles*, where *Lewis XIV.* laid out immense Sums, contains less Marble, if we except the Statues, than the Palace of a simple *Genevise* Senator. Time has already defac'd the carved Work of the Fore-front of the *Tuilleries*, though the Structure is not yet finish'd.

The Ruins of the Cities in the *Archipelago* have for several Ages been the Admiration of Travelers; yet the *Turks* diminish them daily, and carry off prodigious Quantities of Marble: How much therefore must there have been at first? The Mosque of the Sultan *Achmet* was entirely built of the Stones taken out of the Ruins of *Troy*. The Columns which form the Peristyl of that Temple, one hundred and thirty in Number, were all found entire in the Fields of that ancient City. For near two hundred Years the *Turks* had no other Bullets for the Cannon of the *Dardanelles* but *Corinthian* Chapiters and Columns, which they broke to Pieces, and cut into globular Shapes. What a prodigious Number of Buildings, entirely Marble, must there formerly have been in *Greece*? What triumphal Arches, Portico's, Peristyls, Fountains and Pillars? *Rome* could not boast of so many sumptuous Buildings as *Greece*, if we may judge by the Quantities of Marble and Pieces of Architecture that have escap'd

scap'd the Fury of the Times. I acknowledge, that in all Probability the *Tyber* must possess immense Riches, and that there are more Statues in its Channel, than there are now in *Rome*: But all those Treasures are hid from us, and there's no judging of Things invisible.

About forty Years ago, our Brethren, the *Jews* of *Rome*, offer'd twenty Millions to the Sovereign Pontiff for a Permission to search the *Tyber*, and to turn its Course only for six Months. They resolved to confine their Search to a League above and below *Rome*, and 'tis highly probable that they must have found ten times the Value of what they offer'd; however, as they pretended that the whole twenty Millions might be lost, they desired, for the more convenient Execution of the Work, that the River might be turn'd off in the Summer; the very Thing that made their Proposal to be rejected. Twenty Millions, 'tis true, were very tempting; and the Matter was brought on the Tapis more than once: But at length it was judg'd, that the great Heats might draw such Exhalations from the drain'd Ground as would occasion infectious Distempers; and therefore it was determin'd that no Search should be made. For my part, I'm apt to think, that the Apprehension of Distempers was only a Pretext made use of to cover the real Reasons of that Refusal. The *Jews*, no doubt, would have carried away and sold in other Parts, the Statues, Bronzes, Medals and Columns, none of the Inhabitants of *Rome* being able to purchase them at the Price that many Sovereign Princes and rich private Men in foreign Countries would have given: And the same political Reason has been the Cause of prohibiting the Removal of Pictures and Statues from *Rome*. Had it not been for this wise Regulation, *Rome* would have been stripp'd long ago of many fine Things which the Nobility and Citizens

would have sold; and, by Degrees, Strangers; being possess'd at home of what drew them to *Rome*, would have had no Occasion to go any more to that City, which must have been a very great Loss to it. This Regulation is so exactly observ'd, that the great Dukes of *Tuscany* could never obtain Leave to remove the old *Hercules* out of their Palace at *Rome* to their own Dominions.

*Lewis XIV.* in the Time of his greatest Pomp and Splendour, caus'd buy at *Rome* a Part of the Anticks that are in the Gallery of *Versailles*. *Poussin*, the famous Painter, and a Subject of the *French* Monarch's, executed this Commission: And tho' the Sovereign Pontiff consented to the Purchase, because he durst not do otherwise; yet, to prevent a Tumult and Sedition, they were obliged to ship them in the Night-time, when no body knew any thing of the Matter. Indeed, at that Time *Lewis XIV.* was so dreaded at *Rome*, that he could, if he pleas'd, have oblig'd the Magistrates to send them themselves to him, none there daring to disobey his Commands; but he was for avoiding all Discussions, to which the *Romans* are very liable when they're under no Fears: So that 'tis easier to conclude a general Peace throughout *Europe*, than to settle the least Incident with them. It would seem that a Spirit of Trifling and Chicanery has fallen to the Share of the *Nazarene* Priests, particularly the *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, who are strangely addicted to this Failing; and, when they cannot attack their Enemies, seldom fail to fall foul upon their Brethren and Adherents. What follows is a recent Instance.

The Pontiff of *Paris*, whom I have not hitherto mentioned in my Letters, is very much hated by the *Jansenists*: They have attempted to blacken his Reputation by scandalous Libels; but the better Sort of People despise these malicious Invectives, knowing

knowing him to be a fine Gentleman, and that, before he came to *Paris*, he had govern'd another Church where he was universally beloved, even by the *Jansenists*: But his Promotion to the chief Ecclesiastical Dignity in the Kingdom involv'd him into so many Troubles, that he really became a Sacrifice to his Grandeur. Being under a Necessity to stand his Ground against the *Jansenist* Party, he soon regreted the Loss of that Tranquillity which he had enjoy'd in his former Diocese; he endeavour'd nevertheless to soften their Tempers as much as possible, and, abhorring violent and rigorous Measures, would have gladly wish'd that a friendly and sincere Accommodation had been brought about: But the good Man knew not the People he had to deal with. The *Jansenists* were so enraged against him, that they even found Fault with his Eating, as if a good Appetite had been a Crime, and that a large Stomach and Righteousness were Things incompatible. Finding at length that all he could do would be to no Purpose, he let Things take their Course. Complaints had been made for a long Time in his Diocese, of several Defects in a Book which the *Nazarenes* call a *Breviary*; 'tis a Collection of the Psalms of the Royal Prophet, intermix'd with some Prayers of their own composing. The Pontiff ordered Men skill'd in the *Nazarene* Law to compose a new one; but while they were about this Work, the *Jansenists* exclaim'd most sadly both against the Book and the Composers of it: The *Molinists*, on the contrary, gave out every where, that the Work, which would soon appear, was excellent. At last out it came, and, by a merry Accident, the *Jansenists* received it with great Respect, and the *Molinists* with great Contempt; so that *Paris* was soon fill'd with defamatory Writings. Two Priests \* solemnly pro-

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tested,

\* *Languet*, Parson of *St. Sulpice*, and the Parson of *St. Nicolas*.



tested, that they would by no means abandon their old Breviary; particularly one \* made a terrible Rant and Clutter about it. He's such a Phanatick, that 'tis ten to one if, some time or other, he does not introduce the Convulsions of the *Jansenists* among the *Molinists*: He pretends, that the new Breviary is a Book full of Errors; that it deserves to be burn'd; that his Pontiff had probably stuff'd his Guts too much when he gave his Approbation; and that, therefore, he appeal'd from the Afternoon Pontiff to the Morning Pontiff. The Parliament, not finding his Reasons valid, maintains that the Breviary is good and sufficient, and, as such, ought to be received. This Sovereign Court has since condemn'd a certain Writing, supposed to be done by the same phanatick Priest, to be burn'd by the common Hangman. Mean time the Affair of the Breviary is not yet ended: The enraged *Molinists* say 'tis good for nothing, and that no Arrer of Parliament can make bad Merchandize good. They compare this Book to Bacon that smells rusty, and is enough to spoil the best Sauce: Just so, *say they*, this Book is capable of poisoning the soundest Mind. I don't know where these *Nazarenes* have fish'd out such a Comparison so much in the *Hebrew* Taste; a *Jew* could have thought of nothing more *a propos*, considering the Aversion we naturally have to the Hog, an unclean Animal, and whose Flesh is forbid us by our Holy Law.

There's nothing new a-stirring at *Paris* but the Dispute about this Breviary, of which I shall let thee know the Conclusion. I fancy that the Priests will be obliged to submit; for the secular Judges have a terrible Way of punishing, by stripping them of their Revenue, the only effectual Way to bring the greedy Clergy to Reason.

The

\* The Parson of St. *Sulpice*.

The greatest Stickler against the Introduction of this new Book, has the Reputation of making a God of his Money. He's building a magnificent Temple, by which, 'tis confidently reported, he gets more Money to himself than he pays to the Workmen. Under the specious Pretence of collecting for the Charges of the Building and the Decorations of it, he picks up Money from all Corners, and from all Sorts of Persons: 'Tis no matter to him how or from whom, if it does but come; and I'm pretty well assur'd, that if he could be allow'd to tax the Trade of Whoring at *Paris*, he would have no Scruple of Conscience to collect it, and build his Temple as the famous *Egyptian* Courtesan built one of the Pyramids of *Egypt* with the Money arising from her Trade.

Thou'lt perhaps be surpris'd, my dear *Isaac*, at the Obstinacy of this Clergyman to distinguish himself from his Brethren; he proposes, by his Opposition, to make his Court to the Sovereign Pontiff. 'Tis by such bold Strokes that a private Man makes himself known, and renders his Name considerable among the Madmen of the Party that he espouses. The Court of *Rome* is sure, some time or other, to reward this blind Zeal, and is always grateful for Services done her; and thus the most criminal Undertakings are often best recompenced: So that we every where see, and particularly among Ecclesiasticks, modern *Erostratus*'s, who, to make their Names famous, set all on Fire, and raise sudden Commotions in Times of greatest Tranquillity.

Some Years ago a Pontiff, an outrageous *Molinist* \*, published a Writing contrary to the Respect due to the King his Master, and to the Welfare of his Country. The Jesuites were suspected to have been the Hatchers of this injurious Paper, though  
they

\* The Archbishop of *Arles*.

they had no Share in it, as the Pontiff publicly declared afterwards, when he heard it was laid to their Door; and not only so, but also declared, in the same publick Manner, that they had done all they could to dissuade him from it, of which I make no doubt: For though the Jesuites are the most rigid *Molinists*, yet they are the most politick. The Impertinencies of their Subalterns often discredit the Society, and 'tis much against their Will that they should be guilty of so many silly Things; but they cannot always restrain them, no more than the general Officers of an Army can prevent the Folly of a Soldier, a Suttler, or a common Pedee.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; may the God of our Fathers load thee with the good Things of this World.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LXXI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE News from *Corfica*, my dear *Isaac*, is very uncertain; and People begin to doubt of the Success of K. *Theodore's* Projects: Money grows scarce with him, and there's no Appearance of the Arrival of the Succours that he had promis'd. A third Party is formed in the Country; and the *Genoese* flatter themselves with a speedy and favourable Turn of Affairs, or, at least, give out so. Tho' I have frequently and seriously reflected on the Transactions in *Corfica*, I must fairly own that I'm entirely

tirely in the Mist about them. I'm almost in daily Conferences with several Politicians who pretend to unravel all the Mysteries of that Adventure with the same Assurance as if they were entirely let into the Secret: As for the famous Magician, who protects this Knight-Errant, he's perfectly known by them, and from whence came the Succours which he has already had, or is to have; but all their Reasonings, duly consider'd, amount to no more than meer Conjectures which won't bear the Test of Examination.

If we consider *Theodore* as a Knight-Errant, or believe what the *Genoese* say of him, his Arrival in *Corfica* is something as extraordinary as the wonderful Rise of *Tamerlane*, who, according to some *Arabian* Authors, sprang from a common Shepherd; and 'tis less surprizing that a private Soldier of the *Tartars* should become the Master and Head of his Country, than to see a private and ordinary Man get himself declared to be a King in the Midst of *Europe*, and that in the Face too of a great many Princes extremely jealous of the Grandeur and Majesty of their Rank, which must be debased should a Fortune-hunter, known for such, become their Equal. For, in short, should it happen that the *Genoese* are entirely drove out of *Corfica*, and that *Theodore* should be acknowledg'd by the Inhabitants for their Lord and Master, I would fain know what the Sovereign Powers in *Europe* would do in that Case? Monarchs, such as the Emperor and King of *France*, could they ever recognize, as a lawful Sovereign, a King whom Crimes had form'd, and Rebellion crown'd, and who, before he mounted the Throne, dishonour'd, by publick Report, more than once the Character of a Gentleman? I scarce think there's any body so silly as to imagine that those Princes would be guilty of such a Conduct. But, on the other hand, *Theodore* would have Dominions,



minions, Subjects, Ships, Harbours, Towns, &c. Should any Quarrels happen with him, as no doubt there would, in what Shape are they to be manag'd? the Situation of *Corfica* would even force *France*, because there are few Ships bound from *Marseilles* to the *Levant* but what anchor, in going or coming, upon the Coasts of *Corfica*.

Several Persons remove all these Difficulties by saying, that as soon as *Theodore* is Master and peaceable Possessor of this Country, another Power would drive him out: But I think this Reasoning is not at all well grounded, nor agreeable to good Policy; for whatever Prince would undertake his Expulsion, must lay his account to meet with Opposition from other Princes, unless Matters had been concerted among them before hand. But, say certain People, every thing is already settled and concluded, and they all know what they have to trust to. This is what I shall enquire into hereafter; but in the mean time I can't hinder myself from thinking that this Opinion is liable to many Difficulties. Let us only reflect a little upon the Obstacles (supposing that *Theodore* acts upon his own Bottom) which must attend any Power's attempting to drive him out of *Corfica*, if he was once in peaceable Possession of it. Should *Spain* form such a Design, 'twould no doubt be the Interest of *France* strenuously to oppose that Nation's getting the Possession of a Country, Towns and Harbours which would entirely block up those of *Marseilles*, *Toulon* and *Antibes*; for should a War be declar'd between *Spain* and *France*, the former, with two Frigates of twenty Guns each, would absolutely interrupt the *Levant* Trade: In a Storm the Merchants Ships would be obliged to go for Shelter to distant Ports, and sometimes could find none, if the Winds prevented their approaching the *Italian* Coast. The Island of *Corfica*, possess'd by so formidable a Power as *Spain*, would become as pernicious

pernicious to the Trade of *Marseilles*, as the *French*, in Time of War, would be troublesome to the *Catalans*, were they Masters of the Island of *Majorca*. Throw but thy Eyes, my Friend, on a Map, and thou'lt be satisfy'd of the Truth of my Opinion. 'Tis not only the Interest of *France* to prevent the *Spaniards* from the Conquest of *Corfica*, but likewise the King of *Sardinia's*: *Nice*, *Villa-Franca* and other Maritime Towns are but too much cramp'd already by *France*; and I don't think that Prince would be very fond of another Neighbour so incommodious. Some Politicians are of Opinion, that the *European* Powers would readily consent to the King of *Sardinia's* having *Corfica* annexed to his Dominions: But *France* has the same Reason to oppose the *Piedmontese*, as they have to exclude the *Spaniards*; for though the former are not near so powerful as the latter, yet they might become very troublesome to *France* whenever they should unite with other Powers confederate against her. What must have been the Fate of *Toulon*, and all *Provence*, had the *English* and *Dutch* been possess'd of Towns and Harbours forty Leagues from *Provence*, where they might have come with a Squadron in twenty four Hours whenever they thought proper?

If it be almost as much the Interest of *France* as of *Spain* to have the *English* dispossest'd of *Port-Mahon*, how much more is it her Interest not to let a formidable Power get a Footing in Ports that block up all her Habours in the *Mediterranean*? Some think, that she would not be very uneasy if those Ports were possess'd by the King of *Naples* and *Sicily*. But this way of Reasoning is so weak that it confutes itself: For the Courts of *Naples* and *Madrid* are so very closely united in Interest, that the same Reasons which oppose the *Spaniards* are valid against the *Neapolitans*. Besides, all Men are mortal, and Sovereigns themselves must yield  
to

to the Laws of Death. If, unfortunately, the Prince of *Asturias*, who has no Children, should happen to die, do not those Ports in that Case devolve to *Spain*? But may some say, who knows whether, by secret Articles of the Treaties that render the *Neapolitans* Masters of the Country, they would not be obliged to give it up to another Prince the Moment their Sovereign should become King of *Spain*? To this I answer, That an able Politician ought not to rely upon the Faith of Restitutions. The Councils of Princes are as fruitful in Excuses as the Society of Jesuites. Plausible Pretences are never wanting; and they know how to distinguish betwixt the Spirit and Letter of a Treaty, thereby reserving the Privilege of directing the Intention as it suits best with their Interest. The *English* are lately become downright Jesuites upon this Head; and 'tis my Opinion, that they're obliged to that Society for the Arguments which they make use of with regard to the Article of *Gibraltar* and *Port-Mahon*. What might not *Spaniards* do who glory in being directed by the Children of *Loyola*!

These are the Reasons, my dear *Monceca*, which induce me to think that *Theodore* acts upon his own Bottom, without the Orders or Directions of a higher Power. The want of Money and Troops, the Slowness of his Procedure, not having as yet done any thing of Consequence; all this, together, confirms me in my Opinion.

But, on the other hand, when I come to consider that Baron *Newhoff* was a Slave two Years ago, and that he lay sick in an Hospital the Year before; that he has squander'd away his Patrimony long since, and that I see him arrive in *Corfica* with Chests full of Gold Coin, and with eight Brass Cannon, the least of which must have cost above two thousand Crowns, I know not what to make of it. There's no such thing as borrowing two or

three

three hundred thousand Livres on vain Hopes, and which even appear ridiculous to any that will but examine them. How then must the Baron have procured the Supplies of Money with which he has assisted the *Corficans*? If not from private Hands, it must have been from some Sovereign Prince: And, if this be the Case, how comes it that he abandons him in his Straits? Why does he let him want Money, and thereby expose him to lose all the Benefit of the Sums already given?

The Mind is lost and bewilder'd in attempting to unravel such Intricacies. The Politicians imagine that they can see through all these Mysteries: As for my part, I frankly own that I know little or nothing of the Matter, and am apt to think, that, if they would speak with the same Sincerity, they would also confess their Ignorance; but they want that their Conjectures should impose upon the World. This is pretty much the Failing of all Politicians: Nothing puts them to a Stand, and they readily find Reasons to solve the greatest Difficulties. They penetrate into the Closets of Princes: No Secret transacted there is hidden from them, and they foretel the End of a War before 'tis well begun. In short, they regulate all the Courts of *Europe*, but, unluckily, they're as much out in their Predictions as Almanack Makers.

Time only, my dear *Isaac*, must clear up the confused Chaos of Ideas that Men force upon the Baron *Newhoff's* Undertaking. Mean while, 'tis proper for us to suspend our Judgment. Ten or twelve Persons in *Europe* know the whole Secret of this Affair, and no doubt but it must be very diverting to them to hear People discoursing upon it. The Day will come when all the Mystery will be made publick, and then we shall in our Turn laugh at the vain Conjectures form'd now upon it.



I resolve to lose no Opportunity of informing myself exactly of ever thing that may give us Insight into this Adventure, and to write thee as soon as I hear any thing new. At present 'tis confidently reported, that the said Lord *Theodore* treats his new Subjects with the greatest Severity, particularly those whom he suspects to be against him. A bare Suspicion is a Crime in his Eyes that nothing but Death can expiate, which has been the Fate of four of the principal Men that oppos'd him; though I can't but think that he would have done much better to pardon them, since a generous Action of this Kind would have gain'd him more Hearts than servile Fear can ever retain in Respect and Submission.

I humbly conceive that, in Civil Wars, the Blood spilt upon Scaffolds produces the same Effect as the Martyrdom of the Primitive *Nazarenes*, whom the Pagan Emperors caus'd to be so inhumanly butcher'd. The more of them that were put to Death, the more the Number increas'd. The very same thing happens in Civil Wars: The Spirit of the Party is heated by Murder and Slaughter, and the Death of one Person determines an hundred more to espouse his Quarrel. The Murderer is sure to be hated, and the Murder'd to be pitied. The Death of the famous Admiral *de Coligni*, and of other Protestants, only serv'd to augment the Number of *Henry IV.*'s Adherents. The Losses sustain'd by the Catholick Cantons in their last War united them more closely than ever together. Since the entire Abolition of Popery in *Ireland*, the Number of Papists is rather increas'd than diminish'd. The Minds of Men are more easily cured by soft and mild Treatment than by violent and bloody Methods. So see we, that the rigid and cruel Behaviour of *Philip II.* gave the first Blow to the *Spanish* Monarchy, and deprived him of the Countries that now form the Republick of *Holland*.  
Farewel,

Farewel, my dear Friend; may thou be still prosperous and happy.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXXII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

**B**USINESS obliged me to make some Stay at *Lausanne* before I pursued my Journey thro' *Lyons* and *Languedoc* in my Way to *Lisbon*, where I intend to go with all possible Expedition. I'm provided with Passports for six Months from the Courts of *Spain* and *Portugal*, so that I can finish my Affairs there without disquieting Fears of Priests and Inquisitions. *Samuel Pinaro* has procured me a Commission as Agent Extraordinary from the Republick of *Genoa* while I remain at *Lisbon*, and my Character, as such, is an absolute Security to my Person. I doubt not but that in my Travels I shall make Discoveries which may give Occasion to some philosophical Reflections, and I'll take care to be as punctual in my Correspondence from *Spain* as I have been from *Italy*.

I have but little to say at present. *Lausanne* is the Capital of the *Pays de vaux* in the Canton of *Bern*, and a very pretty Town. The Inhabitants live more after the *French* Fashion than their Neighbours, yet, in general, their Manners and Customs are much of a Piece with their Brethren; and their Country produces nothing but what may be found in the other Cantons. The Wine here is pretty good, and their Lake and Rivers abound with all

manner of Fish; nor is there any want of Fowl and all other Necessaries of Life. Nature, in this Climate, furnishes every thing that's useful, and is only sparing in Things that serve to encourage Luxury and Debauchery.

The *Swiss* are inur'd to all the Hardships of Hunger and Thirst, Heat and Cold. Their Diet is not costly, being mostly Milk and Cheese. The Art of Cookery and Cooks are in no Esteem among them; for the Art of dressing up of Poisons, pernicious to Health and long Life, under the Name of nice Ragoo's and delicate Dishes, is a Thing unknown to this People. Their Houses have nothing of the modern Grandeur, and their Furniture answers to the Primitive Simplicity. Their Apparel, made for Use, and not to dazzle the Eyes of the Spectators, perfectly corresponds with the rest. But then one terrible Failing, *viz.* excessive Drinking, eclipses so many Virtues. They sometimes spend Days and Nights in continual Debauchery; and there's no getting into their good Graces but over a Bottle. Wine is the Seal of Friendship: The best Guzzler the prettiest Fellow, and he who can swallow down six or seven Bottles is as much courted at their Entertainments as a Poet or a facetious Author is in *France* at Parties of Pleasure. In *Switzerland*, *Chapelle* and *St. Evremond* would have pass'd for two pitiful Fellows, not worthy to be admitted into good Company.

However fond the *Swiss* are of Drinking, the Moment a Debauch is over they fall to their ordinary Occupations, and double their Industry and Diligence to regain their Expences. They *work for Drink*, (says a modern Author) *and drink that they may work the better*. Their Inclination to Wine does not hinder them from being prudent and circumspect in publick and private Affairs; so that one would think *Bacchus* had fortified their  
Brains

Brains against the Fumes of Wine more than other People's: For there's no Treaty, Agreement, Lease or Contract made, but where the Bargain can be wet with the bewitching Liquor, which has no bad Effect upon their Prudentials. So that a *Swiss*, who tipples from Morning to Night, is never at a Loss to know what may contribute to the Advantage and Happiness of his Country. This is a sort of Miracle: But there's no room to bring the Truth of a Thing so manifest in question, the Cantons having for so many Ages maintain'd their Liberty against several Princes who wanted to subdue them. 'Tis to their Union that they owe their Preservation, and the Esteem they have acquir'd all over *Europe*, where there's not a Prince who is not glad to court their Alliance.

The *Swiss* have fallen on a Method of keeping up a great Number of disciplin'd and experienc'd Soldiers without Cost or Charge: They send their Youth to serve in foreign Countries. A great many Sovereigns have *Swiss* Regiments in their Pay, which are, by Permission of the Cantons, recruited in their own Country: But as the young People list and go abroad for some Time, in like manner they who preceded them are discharged, and return to their native Country perfectly train'd up in the military Art. But besides the Soldiers form'd out of *Switzerland*, great Care is taken to cause the Citizens and Tradesmen perform military Exercise on certain Days of the Year; and even the very Peasants are not exempted, who, after working certain Days of the Week for themselves, employ the rest for the publick Good and Safety of the Country.

Though these Precautions are very rational and prudent, yet the Cantons need be under no Apprehensions of being invaded by Foreigners; the inaccessible Mountains of the *Alps* are their Ramparts,



and there's not a Prince in *Europe* that, either from Fear, or Interest, dares to attack them: For, supposing that after a tedious War he should at last subdue them, what he got by it in fifty Years would not defray the Expence of one single Campaign. If ever the *Swiss* are in danger of being destroy'd, it must be by themselves. While they continue united, they will subsist as they have done hitherto: But if they come to be divided; if Hatred, Discord and Envy get Access to their Hearts, they'll do themselves, in a short Time, what all *Europe* could not accomplish.

Some Years ago the Popish and Protestant Cantons enter'd into a cruel War against one another. A Monk nam'd the *Abbot St. Gall* had occasion'd this Breach: For in all the *Nazarene* States it would seem that Divisions and Dissentions are owing to the turbulent Spirit of Monks and Priests. This Abbot had put himself at the Head of the Popish Cantons, and, like another *Joshua*, said, That he resolved to extirpate all the Enemies of God's People; for as such he look'd upon the *Swiss* that were Protestants. Every Soldier of his Party had received Billets, in which was writ the Number of those whom each of them should murder: One was oblig'd to kill five, another six, another seven; in short, more or less, as the Abbot judg'd of the Soldier's Courage and Strength. He drew up his Army, and, before the Battle began, promis'd a Place in Heaven to those who should die in it, and many Indulgencies, on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff, to those who should perform the Orders of the Billet: Thereafter he prudently withdrew to a Place of Safety, leaving to his Officers the Care of what remain'd. But the Event did not at all answer his Expectation, for his Army met with an entire Defeat; the murdering Billets had no Effect, and our modern *Joshua*, far from praying the

Diety

Diety to stop the Sun's Course that he might have Time to compleat the total Overthrow of his Enemies, was a humble Supplicant, that Night and Darkneſs might ſcreen him and the poor Remainders of his Army from the Fury and Vengeance of the Proteſtants.

After this Battle the Popiſh *Swiſs* were ſenſible of the Folly they had committed, and were convinced how ruinous it muſt be for them to continue a War ſo unſucceſſful in its Beginning; and therefore made Propoſals of Peace to their Enemies, who, charm'd to recover Brethren whom Diſcord had torn from them, readily conſented to an Accommodation that pacified all *Switzerland*, and ſecur'd its Liberty on ſuch a ſolid Foundation, that while they are united nothing can ſhake it: A Truth, of which all the Cantons, both Popiſh and Proteſtant, are perfectly convinced, and accordingly make it their Endeavours to live in Unity and Peace. The Abbot *St. Gall* makes now and then Attempts to embroil Affairs again, and to foment new Diviſions; but the Papiſts have learn'd Wit from a dear-bought Experience, and the Proteſtants rather chuſe to bear with ſome Things patiently than to throw their Country again into a Civil War.

Sometime after the Reformation began, the Difference of Opinions riſing high, and the Magiſtrates, fearing that thoſe jarring Sentiments might terminate in a popular Tumult and Sedition, unanimouſly reſolved, that in the Cantons where there were more Papiſts than Proteſtants, every one ſhould hereafter adhere to the Party of the Sovereign Pontiff; and that in thoſe where the Number of his Adherents was leſs than that of his Adverſaries, they ſhould entirely ſeparate from his Communion. This was executed with the ſame Facility that it was propos'd. All was calm and quiet, and every one

one liv'd peaceably in his own House; and it must be own'd, that People who act with such Prudence and Discretion have nothing of the Spirit of Division and Contention in their Characters: And indeed the *Swiss* are the only People capable of entering into Measures with such Frankness and Sincerity. They don't, I own, pretend to be great Philosophers, and I scarce believe that their Country can boast of many Authors of any great Reputation; for a Poet in that Place of the World is as great a Rarity as an Elephant at *Paris*: And their Cellars are generally better stock'd with Wine than their Closets with Books. It may nevertheless be said of the *Swiss*, that they have a great Share of good Sense, tho' their Neighbours have got the Wit \*.

I have

\* The Marquis d'Argens having been reflected on in a Paragraph foisted into the *Bibliothèque Germanique*, Tom. XL. unknown to the learned Author, M. de Beausobre, as appears by the following Letter from the said Gentleman to the Marquis, inserted in his general Preface to the *Jewish Letters*.

S I R,

**I** Was very much surpris'd and vex'd to find, in Tom. XL. of the *Bibliothèque Germanique*, a Letter in which one of your *Jewish Letters* is criticis'd. As it is generally known that I am concern'd in that Journal, you perhaps may have imagin'd that I was also concern'd in the Publication of that Letter; which obliges me, Sir, to acquaint you that I had no hand in it, and that it was inserted without my Knowledge. A long Indisposition with which I was seized in the Beginning of Autumn, and of which I am not as yet perfectly recovered, put it out of my Power to direct the Journal: I only sent the IXth Section of the Answer to the Journalists of *Trevoux*, and had no Concern in any other Part of it. If I had any Remarks to make upon your Works, I certainly would communicate them to yourself; that Regard is justly due to an Author, who, like you, is full of Wit, and who has enrich'd the Publick with most agreeable and instructive Works. Continue, Sir, to deserve the Esteem of all honest Men who relish Truth and good Things; you have acquir'd all mine, &c.

BERLIN, Feb. 15,  
1738.

DE BEAUSOBRE.

The

I have read a Book, intitled, *Letters concerning the French and the English*, by a *Swiss*, which passes in this Country for a Master-piece, and meets with Encouragement in foreign Countries, tho', to be plain with thee, I don't think it deserves it. The Author affects to be witty, and to say pretty Things: This is his Foible, and it runs him into a Labyrinth of Divisions and Subdivisions. *Le beau*, according to him, *n'est pas toujours bon; mais le bon doit etre beau. Les François n'ont que le beau. Leur beau ne vaut donc pas le bon*, i. e. what's comely is not always good, but what's good must be comely. The *French* have only the comely, but their comely is not equivalent to the good. Now the whole Tendency of this Hotch-potch of good and comely, and comely which is not good, is to prove that *Boileau*, and some other eminent Authors, are mean Genius's, and scarce worth reading. In his Opinion, the *English* Comedies are

The Marquis d'Argens, I say, being reflected on as if he had asserted that there are no truly learn'd Men in *Switzerland*, thought it necessary in this Place to make *Aaron Monceca's* Apology as follows: "He was very much persuaded to the contrary, but he spoke in general; and his Expressions, taken in their just Sense, cannot be otherwise interpreted, than that Men of Learning are scarcer in *Switzerland* than in *France* and *England*. Whoever imagines that *Aaron Monceca* wanted to disparage the *Swiss*, in order to extol the *French*, knows nothing of his Sentiments; for he allows that the former possess solid Treasures, and the latter nothing but Tinsel. Can a true Philosopher put any Talents in the Scale with Wisdom and sound Reasoning? Can the most sparkling Wit be compared to good Sense? I read over this Letter three Times successively, with a firm Resolution to strike out every thing that might occasion the Complaints of certain People, and I could find nothing but what I have very often heard said by two hundred *Swiss* Officers or Merchants, Men of Wit and good Sense: But who, judging of Things without Prejudice, did not think that the blaming of the Faults of a Nation in general, was determining the Merit of every private Man. I repeat it again: Let this Letter be read with a philosophical Eye, and it will appear whether I intended to affront one of the most respectable Nations of *Europe*."



are despicable in the Eyes of good Judges; tho', as to the *Belles-Lettres*, it must be acknowledg'd that Nation has distinguish'd itself, and produced many excellent Pieces. In short, my dear *Monceca*, notwithstanding the Approbation of this Book by many People, I think it wretched, and writ in a bombastick, obscure Stile, conveying no lively Idea to the Imagination, stuff'd with false Criticisms and erroneous Opinions.

It would not be safe, where I am, to speak so freely of this Work: The People are strangely prepossess'd in its Favour, almost as much as of the Liberty of the Citizens, which they are for ever founding in our Ears; tho' I must say, that this Liberty, about which they make such a Clutter, extends only to People of a certain Rank: For the Vulgar are in more Subjection here than in any other State. Every Bailiff in this Country is a petty Sovereign, who studies to make the best of his Office as long as he is in it; so that the People often groan under the Government of some Bailiffs, whom they love as the Devil does Holy Water.

All Countries, my dear *Monceca*, have their Good and Bad; and should we run over the different Forms of Government, we'll see that they differ but in a very few Things: I mean the *European* Nations, out of which I except those where the Inquisition exercises its Fury, from which good Lord deliver us!

*Lausanne, \*\*\*\*\*.*



LETTER



## L E T T E R LXXIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

A Piece of News is handed about here, no less diverting than extraordinary. 'Tis confidently reported, that the new King of Corsica has writ to the Wife of the Archdutchess Mary Magdalen's Steward, to notify his being elected King of Corsica, and to desire her to procure the necessary Passports for a Minister whom he intended to send to the Court of Vienna.

If this News be true, I think good K. *Theodore* has not his Equal in Impertinence and Folly. What Mortal is fitter for *Bedlam* than he who imagines that a Prince, such as the Emperor, would receive an Envoy or Embassador from a Parcel of Rebels who rather deserve his Indignation than Protection, by abusing his Goodness in revolting a-new some Months after he had procur'd their Pardon from the *Genoese*; and only making use of the Emperor's favourable Disposition, the better to bring about the Crimes which they were contriving?

But, after all, tho' I should admit, my dear *Isaac*, that the *Corsicans* were justly provok'd, by the Tyranny of the *Genoese*, to rise up in Arms; can one so much as harbour a Thought that the Court of *Vienna* would receive the pretended Envoys of a Knight-Errant, and a few lousy Highlanders, to the Prejudice of a Republick always protected by it? To afford an Asyle to such sort of People  
would

would be a Stain upon the Majesty of the Imperial Throne. Rebels are always odious to Princes, but when their Crimes are useful to them; and it may be very well said, that, though Sovereigns love the Treason, yet they hate the Traitor. They're afraid of Monsters rising in their own Dominions, such as those whom they find amongst their Enemies; and if they sometimes reward Villainy with one Hand, they endeavour to find out a Pretence to punish the Villain with the other. The *Spaniards* greatly undervalued the *French*, who, betraying their Country, abandon'd their lawful Sovereign. They made use of them as Tools to their Designs; but would, by no means, have trusted them with Places of Importance: They were too good Politicians not to know that they who could betray their lawful Sovereign, would much more readily betray those to whom Crimes alone have attach'd them.

Let us only observe Men who have been justly tax'd with Violation of their Faith and Oaths, we shall always find that they never stopp'd at the first Perjury, but by Degrees were familiariz'd, nay harden'd, in Treason; so that 'tis at last become an Art and Science, and is christen'd *State Policy*. Fatal Blindness! which, under the Veil of an affected Precaution, conceals Fraud, Perjury and Diffimulation.

However hurtful to Society may be the perfidious Talent of artfully imposing upon the honestest Part of Mankind, yet we see that the Weak and Blind, by Prejudice, have bestow'd great Encomiums upon Men that deserved the Fate of Perjurers. They who have extoll'd *Sylla*, *Cæsar*, *Mark Anthony*, and several other Imitators of their Rapacity, approve the Conduct of distinguish'd Rogues, and censure that of little ones; as if it were a lesser Evil to betray and destroy one's Country, than to steal an Ox or a Load of Corn.

Let

Let People commend, as much as they please, the Valour, Courage, Resolution, Prudence, &c. of those who, by Rebellion, have ruin'd their Country; I no more admire those Virtues in them, than I do the Boldness, Resolution and Contrivances of a Highway-man.

Honesty is not wholly confin'd to simple Citizens; Princes also must make it their Profession: 'Tis trifling to pretend, that their Condition requires Dissimulation; there's a wide Difference between Dishonesty and a prudent, discreet Manner of governing. What Monarch govern'd his Dominions better than *Lewis XII.* the Father of his People? What Man was ever possess'd of more Candour and Honesty? The Frankness and Sincerity of *Henry IV.* baffled all the vain Projects of the *Spanish* Politicians.

They who imagine that a Prince's Greatness is to be judg'd of by the Extent of his Deceit, are guilty of a grievous Mistake. There's a vast Difference between Wisdom and Knavery; and in this corrupt Age they have the same Name, yet the wise Man easily distinguishes them. A King is under no Obligation to discover his Designs to the Enemy, he even ought carefully to conceal them: But then he ought not, by vain Promises, by the Attractives of a feign'd Reconciliation, and under the Veil of a counterfeit Friendship, to draw them into the Snares which he prepares for them. A great Soul, in whatever Station 'tis placed, always takes Virtue for its Guide. Crime is always Crime, and its Colour is unchangeable. He who lies offends Heaven and himself. A Lie has something so odious, that 'tis below the Character of a Gentleman to be guilty of it, in any Shape, or upon any Account.



The Nations which the *Greeks* treated as Barbarians \*, had nevertheless an utter Abhorrence to all sort of Lying and Fraud. *Herodotus* does them this Justice: *The Persians*, says he, *greatly despise those who falsify their Word; for which Reason, they train up their Children, from five to twenty five, in nothing but to shoot with a Bow, to ride, and to speak the Truth* †. What Misfortunes in Life might be prevented, were Men but Slaves to their Oaths, and faithful in the Execution of their Promises! How might the Universe be bless'd with Peace and Tranquillity! Kings would have always faithful Subjects true to their Oaths of Allegiance; and Sovereigns, on the other hand, careful to perform what they promis'd at their Accession, would become the Fathers of their People always ready to obey, being sure that nothing shall be requir'd of them but what is just and equitable.

May all those perish who are for exempting Monarchs from what is their greatest Security upon the Throne. By inculcating the pernicious Maxim, that they may dispense with the Performance of their Engagements, what dangerous Examples do they lay before their Subjects? From this detestable Principle have sprung all the intestine Wars that have so long distracted most of the *European Nations*. The unbounded Power with which Flatterers have made Kings imagine they were vested, hath often undone both them and their Dominions.

How happy is that Prince, my dear *Isaac*, who, amidst the Pomp and Splendour of his Court, preserves a Heart that disdains Fraud and Treachery, and who has Honesty in such high Esteem, that he protects and recommends it to his Subjects, by Example as well as Precept! He becomes the Darling of Contemporaries, and the Admiration of Posterity.

\* *The Persians*, &c. † *History of Herodotus*, Lib. I. Pag. 69. translated by *du Ryer*.

sterity. They to whom the Education of Princes is committed, cannot be over-careful to inspire them with Candour and Sincerity, since from this Source flow all the Virtues. A famous *Nazarene* Pontiff \*, who form'd the Infancy of a great Prince †, wrote a Book for the Instruction of Kings ‡, worthy to be preserv'd in a Case of Gold, such as *Alexander* kept *Homer's* Works in: He mark'd out Lessons for Sovereigns, taught them the Art of reigning over Hearts, and of arriving at a greater Height of absolute Power, by Virtue and Justice, than by all the refin'd Politicks of *Italy*; which Country has produced some Authors whose dangerous Works have been look'd upon as Master-pieces. *Machiavel*, among others, has distinguish'd himself by his political Writings; but were I a Sovereign, I would cause all his Performances to be burn'd, because their whole Tendency is to prove that Virtue must yield to Precaution, and be sacrific'd to it upon Occasion. The Pretence of Princes being tied down to Politicks, and that they are Talents absolutely necessary for them, can never justify the Use of such Books. I have already shewn that true Wisdom ought to despise all Rules that pretend to teach how the Yoke of Virtue and Honour is to be shaken off. A King may vanquish his Enemies, by a superior Conduct and Prudence, without having Recourse to Fraud and Perjury: He may keep his Subjects in their Duty, without reducing them to Slavery. *Neither Art nor Learning*, says a famous *Nazarene* Author, *are necessary for the Exercise of Tyranny*. Of what Use then are all the Books of extravagant Politicks, especially as Works are not wanting §, which teach us to do by Virtue all that can be done by Artifice?

N 2

These

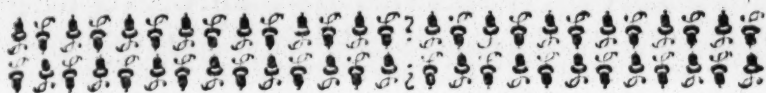
\* Archbishop of *Cambray*. † Duke of *Burgundy*. ‡ *Adventures of Telemachus*. § *Telemachus*.

These, my dear *Isaac*, are my Sentiments of that Policy so much boasted by the *Italians*. Had the *Genoese* but entertain'd the same Notions, and, instead of reducing the *Corficans* to a lamentable Condition in order to disable them from rising, treated them in a more gentle Manner, they had done their Business much better. But, be that as it will, they are now put to a Non-plus, and the Lord *Theodore* gives them vast Uneasiness: He has block'd up some of the Towns of the Island, is Master of the open Country, and will, perhaps, soon undertake something of Consequence. 'Tis assured, that three Ships have appear'd on the Coast of *Corfica* without any Flag, and that they are laden with Ammunition, which comes very opportunely to his Assistance. If this be true, from whence came those Ships? Has the Conjuror, *Merlin*, sent them from the *Fortunate Island*? Nobody can tell; but some People pretend that they came from the Road of *Barcelona*: And, if it be so, the Comedy draws to a Conclusion, and the fifth Act will speedily commence. Tho' the unravelling of this Piece must be very entertaining, yet I scarce think the *Genoese* will be very merry upon it: Nevertheless we must wait yet a while before any real Discovery can be made, or any thing that has the Appearance of Truth advanced upon the Head. If it be certain that some Vessels have brought Succours to King *Theodore*, the Place from whence they sail'd will direct the Conjectures; but if this remains a Secret, People can only guess in the dark. Notwithstanding what Politicians say, who talk of this Affair as if his *Corfican* Majesty had admitted them into his Secret; this is only certain, that, whatever Turn it may take, his Reign will be but short.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; may Prosperity and Happiness attend thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.

LETTER



## LETTER LXXIV.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

MY first Letter from *Egypt* must have given thee a general Idea of the Ruins of *Alexandria*; but now that I am better acquainted with what is remarkable than I was at that Time, I shall endeavour, in this Letter, to be more particular.

The present *Alexandria* is the second Town built out of the Ruins of the ancient City, which the *Arabians*, a People accusom'd to live in the Fields under Tents, and hating Towns, did not much regard when taken by them. They look'd upon Palaces as Prisons, and pull'd down the most magnificent, making use of the Materials for building Houses; which, strictly speaking, were nothing but sorry Cottages: As for the Columns and other Pieces of Architecture, they were preserved for their Mosques. Thus was the ancient and vast City of *Alexandria* destroyed, and more Rubbish to be found within its Walls than inhabited Houses. The Mahometan Princes reduced its Circumference in proportion to the Diminution of the Inhabitants. One of *Saladin's* Successors made use of the Ruins of the old City abandon'd, for building the new one, not above ten *Italian* Miles in Compass: So that the Walls of this modern *Alexandria*, with the hundred Towers, were partly built out of the Ruins of Palaces; and are so contriv'd, being double, that the Soldiers, who guard the Place, may go round it, without being expos'd to Insults, either



from within or without. The Towers are very large, and of a prodigious Height, and each of them will contain about five hundred Men, having above an hundred Rooms, all vaulted like those of some Caserns which I have seen in *Germany*; so that a Garrison of fifty thousand Men might be put into this new *Alexandria* without the least Incommodity to the Inhabitants, from which thou'lt judge of the vast Extent of the ancient City.

Some People pretend that the Walls of *Alexandria* subsisted in the Time of the *Romans*; but such an Assertion proceeds from an entire Ignorance of History: For, not to mention how much less the Extent of this City must have been than what we know it was at that Time, a Man must be blind that is not convinc'd, by his own Observation, that these Walls could not have been built either by the *Greeks* or the *Romans*, but must have been rear'd up out of the Spoils and Ruins of the ancient City; and this plainly appears from the vast Number of broken Pieces of Marble and Pillars, with Stones here and there intermix'd. But after all, my dear *Monceca*, this modern *Alexandria*, which I have just now mentioned, is not the present *Alexandria*; in the former there are scarce two hundred Inhabitants, and 'tis so deserted, that in the Night-time, and early in a Morning, there's no going in it without running the Hazard of being robb'd.

*Et le bois le moins sur, & le moins frequenté,  
Est au prix de ses murs un lieu de sureté.*

*i. e.*

The Woods where Robbers use to hunt for Prey,  
Are not so bad as this deserted Town.

The ancient Buildings which subsisted there having been partly destroyed by Time, and partly by Wars; the People; weary of dwelling among Ruins,  
resolved

resolved to seek out for a more agreeable Habitation, and have accordingly, by Degrees, removed towards that Place call'd the *New Harbour*, close by the Sea-side; where they founded a third *Alexandria*, and quite abandon'd the second, in which nothing almost now remains but some Mosques, preserv'd for the Sake of their Beauty. This new City is as much inferior to the second *Alexandria*, as the second was to the ancient and true one.

'Tis my Opinion, my dear *Monceca*, that as with Men, so with Empires; they rise to a certain Height, then fall by Degrees, and are at last totally ruin'd. Thus the Oriental Empire pass'd from the *Persians* to the *Greeks*, from the *Greeks* to the *Romans*, and from the *Romans* to the *Turks*. Who knows to whom it will belong some Ages hence? Or who can determine when a Revolution may happen? We see the Birth of new Empires as sudden as that of Men, and a perfect Resemblance in the Quickness of their Fall. Had a Man, forty or fifty Years before the Reign of *Alexander*, declared to the *Macedonians* that they should be Masters of all *Asia* and a Part of *Europe*, he would certainly have been look'd upon as a Madman. The Thing happen'd so suddenly, that the Facts wanted the Certainty which we have for them not to pass for downright Romances.

If the late King of *Sweden* had not lost that famous Battle, which preserv'd his Rival on the Throne, what Countries might he not have subdued? On the other hand, what a sudden Revolution might not have happen'd, if, when the said King of *Sweden* was a Fugitive in *Turkey*, a Parcel of Peasants, pick'd up in Haste and mounted upon Horses, many of them without Saddles or Bridles, had not defeated the *Danes*, who were attempting to penetrate into *Sweden*, destitute of Money and Troops, without a King, and without  
Hopes

Hopes of Succours. To what a low Ebb was all that Glory of *Charles XII.* reduc'd? He ran the Risk of being with the Grand Seignior, what the Pretender is with the Sovereign Pontiff.

If *Lewis XIV.* had gain'd the Battle of *Hochstett*, what must have become of the Empire? I don't pretend to determine; but I think that it ran the same Risk as when the *Turks* besieged *Vienna*: And *France*, for its part, would have been but in a bad Way, had not the Marshal *Villars* beat the Allies at *Denain*. All Empires, sometime or other, have undergone dangerous Shocks; and though they have stood them, who knows but that in the Sequel they may be rent and tore to Pieces?

When the *Huns*, *Goths*, *Vandals*, and People from the Northern Provinces, ravag'd the *Gauls* and *Italy*, they turn'd upside down, and destroy'd almost all the Dominions where they pass'd; so that *Europe* quite chang'd its Form. What are become of the ancient *Romans*? In modern *Rome* there are perhaps none other but the Descendants of *Goths*, *Huns* and *Gauls*, and not a Drop of the old *Roman* Blood remaining.

I can't therefore think myself mistaken, my dear *Monceca*, in saying, that as soon as an Empire rises to a certain Height, it diminishes insensibly: And were I even to add, that it is sometimes with Empires as with the Favourites of Fortune, who are often precipitated with the same Rapidity as they rose to their Grandeur, I should not reckon myself guilty of over-stretching.

The *Swiss*, 'tis true, have subsisted for many Ages, without any very material Changes; because, entirely attach'd to the Preservation of their Liberty and their Country, they have withstood the blind Ambition of making Conquests.

*Venice* and *Genoa*, by endeavouring to enlarge their Dominions, have reduc'd themselves to a melancholy

lancholy Situation. In one Age the former lost two Kingdoms \*; and but a few Years ago a flourishing Province † was taken from it: But perhaps the Mediocrity to which it is now reduc'd will be a Means of its Tranquillity and Happiness. The latter is reduc'd to its last Shift, having but just lost *Corfica*, and in a fair Way soon to meet with the unhappy Fate of the Republick of *Lucca*. That proud *Genoa*, which formerly made the Emperors of *Constantiple* tremble ‡, cannot now defend itself against a meer Knight-Errant §, at the Head of a few wretched Peasants, half naked and half starv'd.

Mediocrity sometimes contributes as much to the Continuance and Preservation of States, as it does to the Tranquillity and Felicity of the People. The *Dutch* have that wise Maxim, not to be ambitious of making Conquests. The Government of the United Provinces may be compared to a Master of a Family, a Man of Integrity and Honour, who, content to leave his Children an Inheritance improved to the best Advantage, seeks not to encroach upon his Neighbour's Property.

I could wish that some one or other might find out a good Argument to justify the Thefts of noted Robbers, I should, in that Case, believe *Julius Cæsar* and *Alexander* to be honest Men; but till then I'm tempted to look upon them as illustrious *Brigands*, who had several excellent Qualities, but all darken'd by an invincible Inclination to Robbery. Why! is it less criminal to rob a Town than to steal a Cabbage? *Cicero* attempted to prove the Equality of Sins; but he never presum'd to carry the Paradox so far as to maintain that it was less criminal to rob a great deal than to take a little.

But,

\* *Cyprus* and *Candia*. † The *Morea*. ‡ The *Genoese* were once Masters of *Pera*, one of the principal Suburbs of *Constantinople*.

§ The Baron de *Newhoff*.



But, to return to *Alexandria*, a Traveller may still see, within the Inclosure of its Walls, Pieces of Architecture which Judges must admire. Such is that noble Colonnade towards the Middle of the City, consisting of a Row of Pillars still erect, and of an extraordinary Size and Height, and forming an Oval, in the Middle of which was the most magnificent Square of *Alexandria*. The prodigious Ruins which lie contiguous to this Colonnade, seem to denote, that the most beautiful Palaces of the ancient City fronted that stately Piece of Architecture, or, perhaps, that their Front Walls were built upon the said Pillars, and so form'd the Portico's under which the People walk'd.

Next to this famous Monument, the greatest Curiosities are the two Obelisks, or Pyramids, ascrib'd to *Cleopatra*; of which one is still erect, and the other thrown down and half bury'd in the Sand. The four Sides of these Pyramids are full of hieroglyphical Figures, which give us now but very obscure Ideas of what they represented to the Ancients in speaking Characters.

The famous Column of *Pompey* is another Piece of Antiquity to be admired: Of all the magnificent Antiquities of *Alexandria*, and its Neighbourhood, nothing remains so entire as this Column; its Proportions are so beautiful, that the nicest Eye can find no Defect in them. It consists of three Pieces, of which the Chapter makes one, the Shaft and three Feet of the Base form the second, and the Remainder of the Base the third; so that we may reckon eighty Feet between the Base and Chapter, and a hundred and ten for the whole Elevation, which makes it the highest and biggest in the World.

But these ancient Monuments, my dear *Monceca*, must one Day undergo the Fate of many others that have preceded them. Time has already given them terrible Shocks, and will at last quite demo-

lish

lish them, leaving the World in Ignorance by whom they were erected. The Names of *Pompey* and *Cleopatra* found on these Pillars, is not an absolute Proof that they were set up by them, nor know we upon what Foundation they are so called. Neither Sovereigns nor private Persons are immortaliz'd by Temples, Palaces or triumphal Arches: Great Actions, or ingenious Writings, can only preserve our Memories from Oblivion \*. What Number of Monuments have been destroy'd since *Alcibiades*, *Themistocles*, *Miltiades*, and those other illustrious *Greeks*, whose famous Actions have transmitt'd them to latest Posterity! What Temples, what Palaces have been laid low since the Death of *Homer*! That illustrious Genius still lives among us; and is now the Darling of all Nations, as he was formerly of *Greece*. But, to conclude this Letter, I may venture to say, that only the meaner Sort, whose Talents are lost in the dark

\* *Exegi monumentum æve perennius,  
Regali sive pyramidum altius;  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens  
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series, & fuga temporum.  
Non omnis moriar; multaque pars mei  
Vitat Libitinam: Usque ego postera  
Crescam laude recens; dum capitolium  
Scandet cum tacita virgine pontifex.*

Hor. Ode XXX. Lib. III.

Thus paraphras'd :

More strong than Brass, a Monument more high  
Than *Egypt's* royal Pyramids, have I  
Rais'd up; which Floods of Rain, nor Northern Blast,  
Nor passing Time, nor fleeting Years, can waste.  
Death's fatal Sinde may reach the tender Heart,  
But has no Pow'r to touch the better Part:  
New Wreaths, new Laurels and harmonious Lays,  
From Age to Age, shall crown my Shade with Praise;  
'Till the High Priest, and silent Maid give o'er,  
T' ascend the Capitol, and Gods adore.

dark Night of Time, endeavour to perpetuate their Names by huge Piles of Stones and Marble.

Adieu, my Friend; may Health, Prosperity and Happiness attend thee.

*Alexandria, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER LXXV.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I'M now got to *Lyons*, from whence I propose to set out directly for *Montpellier*, where I resolve to make but a short Stay, that I may get to *Spain* as soon as possible. I find, by my own Experience, that the Remarks in thy Letters upon the Manners and Customs of the *French*, were extremely judicious and just, and I now reap the Advantage of the Ideas which I had before I came among them; for I can look upon many Things very coolly, which otherwise would have been most surprising.

At the Inn where I lodge there are two *Parisian Jansenists*, banish'd to *Lyons* by an Order from Court. There's nothing so merry as their Disputes with a young Abbot who hopes to get a Benefice by the Interest of the Jesuites. I confess that he richly deserves his Reward, if fighting with undaunted Bravery for the Party, against all Comers, ought to intitle him to it. When Arguments fail, he has Recourse to Invectives; and did we not often restrain his Impetuosity, he would collar one of his Antagonists, and so decide the Dispute at Fifty-cuffs.

Two or three Days ago, a Priest, who is a bitter Enemy to the Jesuites, happen'd to dine with us: " I'm inform'd, *said he*, from *Dole*, that Father *Girard* has wrought several Miracles since his Death. If this be true, there's not a Rogue hang'd or broke upon the Wheel but may do the same: The Gibbets and Gallows of *Mont-faucon* will make admirable Catacombs; and Relicks will turn a meer Drug. You're a Block-head, (*says the young Abbot to this Jansenist Priest*) and if you had what you deserve, you would be tuck'd up by the Neck to those Gibbets you talk of, in Company with your darling Father *Nicolas*, *Cadiere*, and all her roguish Family. I'll call the Landlady, and let her know that I will leave her House if she receives Persons excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and Adherents of such a Heretick as the Impostor *Paris*. Me-thinks, my little Prig, *answer'd the Jansenist*, you take it upon a very high Cliff. No higher than I ought, *replied the fiery little Abbot*; and I swear by my Band and Cassock, that if ever you are so impudent as to declaim against Men of Worth in my Presence, I shall know how to silence you. You! a snotty nos'd Boy, *replied the Jansenist*, make me hold my Tongue, when the Respect I owe to my Prince can't restrain me. By *Jupiter Hammon*! I want much to see how you'll make it out. The Thing is easy, *said the Abbot*; and if you say but a Word more I'll stop your Mouth with this Plate, directly let drive at your thick Skull. Odds bobs! a Plate at my Head! A Plate at the Head of a Batchelor of the *Sorbonne*, thou little Excrement of *Loyola*! I'll teach thee to know thy Betters." With that he snatch'd a Bottle, and if two Officers, who laugh'd, ready to burst themselves, at this Ecclesiastical Challenge, had not been so good-natur'd as to check the Fury



of the two Antagonists, I should have been a quiet Spectator of a most bloody Combate.

When the Champions were a little compos'd,  
 " Gentlemen, *said one of the Officers*, you don't ob-  
 " serve, in your Squabbles, the Rules of the mi-  
 " litary Art. Before People proceed to Violence,  
 " they ought to justify, by a Manifesto, their Mo-  
 " tives for declaring War. This is the Practice  
 " of Sovereigns. As for you, Sir, we see plainly  
 " that you're an Enemy to Father *Girard* and the  
 " Jesuites: Let us know your Reasons, and then  
 " the other Gentleman will tell us his. What  
 " must I say, *replied the Jansenist*; are you ignor-  
 " ant of what all the World knows? Is it possible  
 " not to exclaim against a Man who has made  
 " Religion a Cloak for his Debauchery, who has  
 " abus'd his Character of Confessor to seduce his  
 " Penitent, and who, by Sorcery, or some other  
 " Assistance from the Devil, has obtain'd Favours,  
 " as often as he pleas'd, without her being able to  
 " deny him."

The Abbot, whose Blood boil'd in his Veins to hear such a heavy Charge, had not Patience till his Antagonist emptied his Budget. " Father *Girard*,  
 " *said he*, is innocent in the Eyes of all those who  
 " are not bias'd by Malice and Prejudice. He has  
 " fallen a Sacrifice to a hellish Plot hatch'd by three  
 " Fiends, Father *Nicolas*, Father *Cadiere*, and  
 " the Minx his Sister. The *Jansenists* intended, by  
 " losing one of the principal Members of an illu-  
 " strious Society, to give it a mortal Blow. The  
 " Scandal brought upon Religion was of no Con-  
 " sideration with them, provided they could but  
 " crush their Enemies.

" These then, Gentlemen, *said one of the Officers*,  
 " are your reciprocal Reasons, which, in my Opi-  
 " nion, are equally false. In the first place, I shall  
 " answer yours (*continued he, addressing himself to*  
 " the

“ *the Jansenist* ): You pretend that Father *Girard*,  
“ abusing his Character, render’d his Penitent de-  
“ moniack, and debauch’d her. Now I shall en-  
“ deavour to prove one of two Things, either that  
“ Father *Girard* did not seduce Miss *Cadiere*, or  
“ that she was as willing as himself.

“ If the Counsil for Father *Girard* had been al-  
“ low’d to plead upon the Topick of natural Rea-  
“ son, and had not been forc’d to adopt, as an Ar-  
“ ticle of Faith, a ridiculous Notion founded en-  
“ tirely upon the Writings of certain visionary  
“ Monks, and the silly Sermons of Country Cu-  
“ rates, they would have flatly rejected the Notion  
“ of Magicians, or that Witchcraft could deter-  
“ mine the Will. I shall suppose that a Philoso-  
“ pher, directed by Reason, was pleading Father  
“ *Girard*’s Cause before the Parliament of *Pro-*  
“ *vence*: Is it possible (*would he say*) that a Man,  
“ in high Esteem for his Virtue during fifty Years,  
“ should be accus’d of the most enormous Crime;  
“ and that one only Reason should be adduced,  
“ directly clashing with our most evident Notions?  
“ *Then calling sound Philosophy to his Assistance,*  
“ *thus continues*: Let us see, Gentlemen, if it was  
“ in Father *Girard*’s Power to direct this Girl’s  
“ Will, to throw her into Trances, to imprint  
“ Marks in her Body, to make her sweat Blood,  
“ and to cause Crowns of Thorns sprout from her  
“ Head, he all the while absent, and only acting  
“ by the Means of Philtres.

“ ’Tis certain that several Liquors may produce  
“ extraordinary Effects in us, and greatly disorder  
“ the whole of our Frame, by impeding its natural  
“ and usual Operations. This we see verified by  
“ the Effects of Medicines and subtle Poisons,  
“ which kill with the same Quickness as a Dagger  
“ stuck into the Heart, and are unanswerable  
“ Proofs of the Power that certain Philtres have

“ to act upon our Senses. But is it not highly ab-  
 “ surd to maintain that they produce Effects con-  
 “ trary to Nature, and change the very Essence of  
 “ Things? Is it not ridiculous to say, that a Po-  
 “ tion can produce Wood and Thorns in a Per-  
 “ son’s Brain, make them sprout out upon Occa-  
 “ sion, and shrink back again into the same Brain,  
 “ as into their proper Case? I cannot here omit  
 “ taking Notice of that certain Axiom receiv’d by  
 “ all Philosophers. — *A Thing cannot communi-  
 “ cate what it has not.* — Now, how can a Li-  
 “ quor produce Wood, and form Miss *Cadiere’s*  
 “ Crown? For when she was in the famous Trance  
 “ wherein appear’d that miraculous Crown, ’tis a-  
 “ greed that Father *Girard* was absent: It must  
 “ therefore be own’d, that the Philtres not being  
 “ able to produce those Thorns, nor Father *Girard*  
 “ present to fix them, Miss herself must have plac’d  
 “ them. In short, I can’t help thinking, that when  
 “ she shew’d away, she went at least Halves with  
 “ the Reverend Father to impose upon the Publick;  
 “ and I defy any rational Man to think otherwise.  
 “ ’Tis the Height of Folly to assert that Father  
 “ *Girard*, as powerful as God himself, was able  
 “ to determine Miss *Cadiere’s* Will by a superna-  
 “ tural Motion, so as that from Necessity it must  
 “ yield to the Confessor’s Desires. All the Philtres  
 “ and Love-potions in the World can never re-  
 “ duce and determine the Will to a fix’d Point.  
 “ Matter cannot act but upon Matter: How then  
 “ can any liquid Draught act directly upon the Will,  
 “ to produce a certain and determinate Effect? It  
 “ can’t be; and therefore only operates by the Sen-  
 “ sations and Titillations which it may occasion in  
 “ the bodily Part. Thus Philtres may heat the  
 “ Blood, dispose the Spirits to Love, and excite  
 “ carnal Desires; but they don’t determine the Per-  
 “ son

“ son who takes them to one Object more than to  
“ another.

“ The Will remains free, and, by disposing the  
“ Heart to soft Desires, a Stranger may be as readily  
“ admitted as a Lover. Whimsy and Caprice ab-  
“ solutely dispose of Favours which the Agitations  
“ of the Spirits and libidinous Desires have render’d  
“ easy to obtain; and therefore *Cadiere* might have  
“ as well render’d another Man happy. All Fa-  
“ ther *Girard*’s Love-potions did not force her to  
“ determine herself in his Favour, much less to fall  
“ in so cleverly with the Frauds and Miracles  
“ which, as I have already proved, could not be  
“ operated but by a studied Trick of our pretend-  
“ ed female Saint.

“ Confess then, ye Gentlemen of *Jansenius*, that  
“ Miss’s Trances, Raptures and Prodigies, were  
“ meer Inventions to ruin that Jesuit, or that she  
“ was Partner with him in all his Impostures;  
“ chuse you which: But in either of the Cases you  
“ must allow, that the pretended Saint, for whom  
“ you are so zealous, deserves your Comtempt ra-  
“ ther than Esteem.

“ Now as for you, Monsieur *P’Abbè*, (*continued*  
“ *the Officer*) let me tell you in sober Sadness, that  
“ Father *Girard* ought by no means to find an Ad-  
“ vocate in one of your strict Morals. You’ll readi-  
“ ly grant that he was no Fool: He was a Jesuit,  
“ and a Jesuit esteem’d by the Society, consequently  
“ a Man of Wit and Cunning. Pray tell me then,  
“ Sir, if you believe that a Person, who has no In-  
“ tention of imposing upon the Publick, by affect-  
“ ing to be the Dupe himself, could give into all this  
“ Female’s Extravagancies; and twenty or thirty  
“ other pious Ladies, who, without the Benefit of  
“ Philtres, were at least as much hated as our *He-  
“ roine*. That heavenly Creature, *Batarel*, the prin-  
“ cipal and most illustrious of our good Jesuit’s



“ female Saints, had the Pleasure now and then to  
 “ ease her scorching Flame by amorous Kisses;  
 “ This is a Fact which he himself acknowledges \*.  
 “ Now, Sir, can it enter into your Head, that a  
 “ Priest, chaste, prudent and zealous for Religion,  
 “ would suffer a ripe, buxom Wench to clasp him  
 “ in her Arms, and smother him with her Kisses?  
 “ For Shame! confess, that if your Father *Girard*  
 “ was neither a Magician, nor guilty of spiritual  
 “ Incest, he was at least a great Knave and a con-  
 “ summate Hypocrite. I would not have you, how-  
 “ ever, to imagine that, by accusing your Friend,  
 “ my Intention is to justify his Adversary, Father  
 “ *Nicolas*; he was at least as guilty as the other,  
 “ and not near so scrupulous: For the Jesuit still  
 “ kept up to a certain Decency, having always  
 “ a spiritual Pretence for what he did; even tho’  
 “ he had taken a Fancy to kiss the Wound under  
 “ Miss *Cadiere*’s Left Bubby, when he was gazing  
 “ on it in Extasy and Raptures, though still so po-  
 “ litick, that in this, as in all other Familiarities with  
 “ his female Penitents, he constantly preserv’d the  
 “ austere and pious Look †. But the *Carmelite*  
 “ kept up to the Character of his Order, that is to  
 “ say,

\* Being interrogated, If he did not kiss Miss *Batarel* at *Cadiere*’s House? answer’d, That the Evening before his Departure for *Ouloulle*, having gone to take Leave of *Cadiere*, *Batarel* happen’d to be there, and desir’d to speak with him a Word or two in another Room, where they were no sooner got than she shut the Door on a sudden, and embrac’d the Respondent without saying a Word; upon which he directly flung out of her Arms. *General Collection of the Pieces relating to Miss Cadiere’s Process, &c.* Interrogat 149. Tom. V. Pag. 40.

† Being interrogated, If he never kiss’d that Wound? answer’d, No; but that if he had thought it proper to kiss the Ulcer, he should have only done it, in Imitation of the Saints, from a Principle of Religion, or for Mortification. *Collect.* Tom. V. Pag. 34.

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" say, went roundly to Work, without standing  
 " upon Trifles, or mincing the Matter \*.

" Come, Monsieur *l'Abbè*, hang Pinch, and fair-  
 " ly own, that your Zeal for this Child of *Loyola*  
 " is monstrous: To be plain with you, a Man  
 " must be very fond of defending strange Para-  
 " doxes who offers to justify him. The Publick  
 " has very much exclaim'd against the Parliament  
 " for acquitting those three Persons, but since it  
 " did not punish them all three alike, I think the  
 " Decree was right."

Though this Officer's Reasons seem'd to strike  
 home, neither the little Abbot nor the *Jansenist* were  
 pleas'd with them, however they parted with Fury  
 sparkling in their Eyes.

The Hour of the Post's going draws nigh, and  
 I must conclude with a plain Adieu.

*Lyons*, \*\*\*\*\*

\* 'Tis prov'd in several Parts of the Process, that Father *Ni-*  
*colas* had a strong Inclination to debauch Miss *Cadiere*; and  
 that in the Country they both lay in the same Chamber. *Collect.*  
 Tom. V. Pag. 103.



## L E T T E R LXXVI.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I RECEIVED thy Letter from *Lyons*, and was  
 mightily diverted with the Adventure of the *Jan-*  
*senist* and little Abbot. The Officer who endea-  
 vour'd to reconcile them seems to be a Man of  
 good Sense, and to have a very just Notion of the  
 Affair of the Jesuit *Girard*. I always thought that  
 there was Villainy and Imposture upon both Sides;  
for

for it plainly appears, by some of *Cadiere's* Dispositions, that her being bewitch'd was nothing but a meer Contrivance: Yet, howsoever absurd the Accusation of Inchantment must appear to be, it was absolutely necessary, because otherwise Father *Girard* could not have been attack'd. Had *Cadiere* been convicted of being a Partner in his Crimes, she would have been liable to Punishment, the Dread of which would have forced her to Silence; but as she was no free Agent, but determin'd by a superior Power, no Guilt could be imputed to her, but the whole chargeable upon the Devil and the Conjuror.

The *Nazarenes* have such a strong Faith in Sorceries, Witchcraft, and the like, that by this Means they can be made to believe the most absurd Things; so that Imposture, if it can but get under the Veil of Obsession or Possession, becomes that Moment a Miracle, and an Effect of the immediate Will of the Deity. There's nothing more diverting than the Conversations betwixt some Monks and Demoniacs, when the former are laying of evil Spirits: They enter into a thousand little Familiarities with Mr. Devil, who is not behind with them in cracking of Jokes; so that one would take *Belzebub* for a Merry-Andrew, and *Satan* for a polite, well-bred Beau. The original Terms used in one of those infernal Conversations will, I suppose, divert thee: Here they follow, and 'tis a Monk that speaks.

*Sister Boneventure being possess'd by a Devil, named Arfafa, came to me to be confess'd, and withal told me that she would go to none other.*

N. B. *This Devil wanted much to have a Chat with me \*.*

By

\* A true Account of whas pass'd at the exorcising of certain Nuns of the Town of *Louviers*, by the Reverend Father *Gausse*, publish'd at *Paris* by Permission, Anno 1643. Pag. 30. & 31.

By this thou see'st, my dear *Brito*, that the *Nazarene* Monks know all the Devils by Name and Surname; and that the latter have such a Kindness for the honest Friars, that they court all Opportunities to converse with them. I can't help thinking that there's something of a Sympathy between the Monks and the Devils; only that the latter are not half so cunning nor malicious, which thou'lt see plainly by the Trick put upon this Devil *Arfaxa* by the same Monk, who expresses himself thus: "I fell upon my Knees before this infernal Spirit, and told him that I design'd to confound my Pride by that of the Devils, and to learn Humility of them in spite of their Teeth. This Devil, mad to see me in this humble Posture, declar'd that he had Orders to prevent me; but, finding that I continued in the same submissive Situation, he resolv'd to take the Advantage of it, by telling me, *Thou adorest me; thou'rt too infamous, abominable Wretch. I consider thee as the Creature of my God, and the Object of his Wrath; therefore I resolve to submit to thee, because thou dost not deserve it: And in testimony whereof I design this Moment to kiss thy Feet*, but he would by no Means allow of it." What think'st thou, my Friend, of all these Tricks? A Monk must be a clever Fellow indeed, if he has the Art to make a Fool of the Devil, and to put him into a Passion. Who could have imagin'd that *Arfaxa's* Impatience to converse with this Friar would have turn'd out so much to his Shame and Confusion? But the Scene does not terminate here; the Conclusion is sadly mortifying to the poor Devil, and highly glorious to the Monk. "Upon this, continues he, I conjur'd this Devil to make known to me, as far as possible, the Will of God, or that I should kiss his Feet, or he mine." His Answer was, *Thou knowst what Impulse God gives thee; follow it.*

This



This Answer, like the Responses of the Oracles, or rather in the true Spirit of *Norman* Equivocation, shew'd *Arfaxa* to be no Fool. To contribute to his Enemy's humbling himself, was a Means of opening the Gates of Heaven to him; and to kiss the Feet of one who had made so bad a Return to his Civility, was too mean, he thought, for a Devil of any Spirit or Honour: He therefore left the Question undecided, hoping that the Monk would push the Thing no farther; but he was too many for *Arfaxa*, for he directly threw himself at his Feet, and kissed them, to his great Grief and Sorrow. *Afterwards*, says this Friar, *I commanded him to kiss mine, which he very readily did.*

This, my dear *Brito*, was a Trick with a witness; and I dare be bold to say, that *Arfaxa* little dream'd of being so shamefully non-plus'd by the Relicks of Father *Bernard*.

If thou hast adverted to this Devil's ready Obedience at the very naming of *Bernard's* Skeleton, thou must agree that its Virtue must be very extraordinary to have such an Influence upon the infernal Spirits. This Story seems to confirm the ancient Reports of Witchcraft and Witches. *Horace* speaks of one *Canidia*, who, in the Composition of her Philtres, made use of dead Mens Bones dug out of the Church-yards. The *Nazarenes* and *Mahometans*, particularly the *Persians*, imagine that there's a great Virtue in some Bones: But, in my Opinion, they must be extremely fond of giving an Air of Mystery and Religion to the most common Things, who sanctify a Bit of Clay, and look upon it, if I may so speak, as a Portion of the *Divinity*.

What the *Nazarenes* call *Relicks*, does, in no Respect, differ from common Matter, and has no superior Virtue: For if the Matter of which a Bone is form'd, were endued with Qualities superior to common

mon Matter, and were participant of the divine Power, it neither would nor could ever lose its Advantages. Now there's nothing so easy as to new-frame the Head of a Saint, so as to form, in process of Time, a Part of a Highway-man's Body ; and in that Case, to be sure, the Matter of which the Saint's Head was composed, will have lost its divine Virtue: And 'tis as ridiculous to maintain, that a Thing can lose its internal Qualities and Faculties, by the different Form into which it is put, as to say that a Piece of Marble becomes cold because 'tis square. But 'tis still more inconceivable how those Bones can lose their Attributes ; for, being in some respect divine, they ought to be less subject to Change. Let us suppose that a Beast should eat the Head of a Saint, and that this Beast, kill'd by a Gipsy or a Vagrant, being salted, should be his Food for six Months ; 'tis certain that several Parts of the Matter which form'd the Saint's Head will be diffus'd in the Members of the Gipsy. I demand, whether they will then have the Virtue to operate Miracles, and to sanctify the *offending and unclean Parts* to which they are join'd ? If 'tis answer'd, that their Virtue then would not be sufficient, I should deny, upon good Grounds, that ever they could have had it ; because 'tis not the different Configuration that gives the internal Qualities to Matter : A Loadstone, round or square, has still the same attractive Virtue. Perhaps it may be said, that God permits the Operation of those Bones while entire, but not when they are pulveriz'd : But let the most zealous *Nazarenes* shew me, in the Books of their first Doctors \*, where it is reveal'd that God has bestowed a Power on Bones equal to his own, and, tho' I am a *Jew*, I will implicitly submit to their Opinion ; but I'm under no Apprehension of being convinc'd, since there's  
not

\* The Apostles,

not one Word said of Bones in the fundamental Books of their Religion.

By declaring thus publickly against the Superstition of Relicks, I don't approve of the extravagant Contempt that certain People affect of the precious Remains of Persons who, during Life, deserved Esteem for their Piety and regular Conduct \*. What Man is he who does not respect the Tomb of his Ancestors? or, who would dare to prophane their Ashes? Virtuous Men are the Fathers of their Countries, and 'tis to them that they owe the Knowledge of Good, as well as the Means of attaining to it. Let therefore the *Nazarenes* honour the Tombs of certain Persons as much as they will; I approve of their Maxims: But that they should deify their Ashes and Relicks, ascribe as much Power to them as to God himself, that with the Censer in their Hands, in Imitation of the Pagans, they should perfume, upon their Altars, Pieces of Bones and old Rags; I can't agree with such blind Zeal, and can see nothing but what is ridiculous in their Notions: Nay, such Extravagance almost tempts me to side with their Adversaries, who, in their Turn, push to too great a Length their Neglect and Indifference with respect to the melancholy Remains of illustrious Men, the viewing of which may greatly excite to Virtue. We see Statues erected every Day to great Monarchs, and to illustrious Generals, in order to animate their Equals to deserve, by eminent Actions, the like Monuments. Relicks, carefully preserv'd and respected, are nothing inferior to Mausoleoums, or stately Tombs, for exciting People to Virtue.

'Tis

\* I would beg Leave to desire those whom certain People have been at great Pains to persuade that *Aaron Monceca* had been guilty of scurrilous Railing, to consider this Passage, and thereafter to judge whether the Reproaches cast upon him are just or false.

'Tis not therefore, my dear *Brito*, the Care taken by the *Nazarenes* to preserve certain Bones, that induces me to blame them, but only for the Worship paid to them, and the Abuse of them by the Monks, like the Friar who pretended, by the Power of *Bernard's* Ashes, to send the Devil a-packing.

What has render'd Relicks the more contemptible is, their being bought and sold, like Merchandize, at a dearer or cheaper Rate, according to the Reputation of the Maker. Some of the Sovereign Pontiffs have sold a great many very cheap, and others have rais'd the Price to an extravagant Rate. They caus'd search for them in almost every Place where they were likely to be found; and when real ones were not to be got, Counterfeits supplied their Place, and did as well for their Purposes: And in this they imitated certain avaricious Sovereigns who, after having drain'd their Subjects of all their Gold, gave them, in Exchange, Bits of Paper of an imaginary Value. The Power ascrib'd to Relicks of working Miracles of all Kinds, flows from the same Source; and 'tis to Covetousness alone that they owe their surprising Virtues. As the Mountebanks ascribe universal Virtues to their Balsams, just so do the Sovereign Pontiffs to their Relicks; which, with Demoniacks and Indulgences, are inexhaustible Mines, and bring in more Riches than *Peru* and *Brazil* to the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*. The whole Art is to set them off to the best Advantage. Some *Nazarene* Friars are very expert this Way, and know how to extract the very Quintessence of these Ecclesiastical Treasures; and when no *Nazarene* is so silly as to believe himself possess'd, they even exorcise the brute Beasts. This ought not to surprise thee; for the Devils are fain to take up with the Bodies of Beasts, when better Business does not offer. I have read in a Book\*,

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Thee

\* See the Legend of *St. Martin*.



*That a Devil possess'd a Cow, and that he now and then, for his own Diversion, danced a Saraband in her Belly, and flew top over tail on her Back: A certain Man, named Martin, seeing what a sad Plight the poor Beast was in, order'd the Devil to let her alone, and to be gone; the honest Cow was so sensibly touch'd with this Favour, that she came and prostrated herself at Martin's Feet, lowing three Times to shew her Gratitude.*

However ridiculous this Story may seem to be, many others, which the *Nazarenes* firmly believe, are much more so. They are gravely told, that there's nothing more authentick, nor more generally acknowledg'd; and, by often and reiterated Assurances, they at last believe them. O! bewitching Gold! how do'st thou corrupt Mankind\*!

Let us, my dear Friend, never be so much Slaves to that Metal, as to acquire it by Imposture or Cheat. *Adieu.*

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*

\* ——— *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis  
Auri sacra fames!*

*Virg. Æneid. Lib. III.*



LETTER



## LETTER LXXVII.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

THOUGH I have been now very near a Month at *Cairo*, yet something or other still prevented my writing to thee sooner. This City owes its Foundation to one named *Giauber*, Vizier of the Sultan *Meezledin*, who conquer'd *Egypt*. This Vizier caus'd inclose a Plain, where all his Army lay encamp'd, with a thick high Wall; and his Master, the Caliph, a mortal Enemy to Towns, as most of the *Arabs* are, finding this a more agreeable Place of Residence than *Alexandria*, caus'd his Tents to be set up in it. By Degrees some Houses were built in this Inclosure. In process of Time it was full of Palaces and publick Structures; and, at last, grew to be a magnificent City, adorn'd with the Spoils of that of *Masr*, which its Citizens abandon'd, to come and dwell in this new Place. *Giauber*, in Commemoration of his Conquest, had named this City *El Cahera*, which, in the *Arabick* Language, as thou very well knowest, signifies *Victorious*. Hence some *Florentines* and *Venetians*, who were the first *Nazarenes* that were allow'd to settle in this City as Merchants, form'd the Name *El Cairo*; to which they join'd the Epithet, *Grand*, to denote the Extent and Beauty of it\*.

This, my dear *Monceca*, is the true Origin of *Cairo*; and all other Accounts of it, given by His-

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storians,

\* See Mr. Mallet's Account of *Egypt*. Part I.

storians, are false, and contradict the best *Arabian* Writers. This City is now the Capital of *Egypt*, and the Place of Residence of the Bashaw who commands that Province. This important Post is never trusted by the *Porte*, but to one of the principal Men among the *Turks*; and he lodges in a Castle, or sort of Citadel, which is but poorly fortified, if we compare it to some of the strong Places in the *Nazarene* Countries: But as it was built about seven hundred Years ago, by *Saladin*, that's some sort of Excuse for the Irregularity of its Fortifications.

We find in *Cairo* several Pieces of Antiquity which were brought thither, in the Time of the Caliphs, either from *Alexandria*, or from the *Upper* and *Lower Egypt*. We also see the Ruins of several ancient Palaces built and inhabited by the *Egyptian* Sovereigns, and the Noblemen of their Courts: The Gildings of the Ceilings which have escaped the Injuries of the Weather, still look as lively and fresh as if the Workman had but just done them. The Mosques of this City are very beautiful, but not to be compared with those of *Constantinople*: That of *Asbur*, which is the most magnificent, is much inferior to the seven chief Mosques of the Imperial City. They are here, as elsewhere, cover'd with Domes, and adorn'd with *Minarets* \*.

There are, without the Walls of *Cairo*, several Tombs of *Mahometan* Doctors, or Santons, very much frequented by Crowds of People, who flock thither to pay their Devotions. One of the principal Tombs is that of the famous Doctor *Chafai*, and brings in as good a Revenue to certain Santons and Dervises that take care to keep it in Repair, as the Chine or Rump-bone of St. *Francis* does

\* Towers by way of Steeples, where the *Turks* call the People to Prayers regularly five Times a Day.

does to his Disciples, the *Franciscans*: So that the *Turkish* Monks are as zealous for their Saints as the *Nazarene* Monks are for theirs; and have fallen upon a Trick to secure *Chafai* to themselves, not to be outdone by the most accomplish'd of the *Jansenist Convulsionaries*.

An *Egyptian* Monarch, Caliph of *Babylon*, and who kept his Court there, wanted to have the Body of this famous *Chafai* transported to the Place where he resided; accordingly he wrote to the Governor of *Egypt* to cause the Corps to be dug out of the Ground, and to send it to him in a magnificent Coffin. The Governor was very much concern'd at this Order, of which he was afraid the Execution might stir up the People, infatuated with the pretended Saint, to an open Insurrection; and, to avoid the fatal Consequences that commonly attend Seditions, he communicated to the Dervises the Commands he had received, exhorted them to submit to the Orders of their Prince, and to dispose the People for the Transportation of the Saint. "To-morrow, *said he*, I shall execute the Caliph's Orders, therefore hold yourselves in Readiness, and let there be no Disturbance from the Populace." The *Turkish* Monks were at no Loss how to behave; they resolved to oppose the Sovereign's Orders, without incurring his Displeasure, by covering their Design with a Miracle, and by making Heaven declare in their Favour; which is the grand Secret of succeeding in the most difficult Enterprizes. They wrought all Night to finish their Project. After they had open'd the Saint's Tomb, they put combustible Matter round the Corps, mix'd with some Phosphorus's, which would take fire as soon as the Air reach'd them: This done, and every thing put in *statu quo*, they calmly waited for the Governor, who, on pretence of doing Honour to the Saint, came escorted to



the Tomb with ten thousand Men; but in reality this numerous Retinue was to intimidate the People from making any Attempts to prevent the Saint's being remov'd. The Moment he arriv'd, the Workmen began to open the Ground; and when they reach'd the Place where the Corps lay, and began to give Air to the Phosphorus's, the combustible Matter took fire, and such a bright Flame burst out of the Tomb, that the Diggers were for some Moments blinded, and were the first that cried out, *A Miracle!* The Populace did the same; and then the Priests declar'd, that it was not the Saint's Will to quit the Place of his Retirement. The Imagination of the *Egyptians*, ripe for Prodigies, greedily catch'd at this, and immediately the Tomb was cover'd up again without presuming to proceed farther. The Governor, a good Politician and Courtier, artfully took the Advantage of this pretended Miracle to satisfy the People, without disobeying his Master's Commands, to whom he sent an Account of this Prodigy, which ten thousand Witnesses could certify. The Caliph finding that the Saint thought himself so well where he was, that he did not care to remove, consented to his remaining in the old Tomb, where he lies to this Day, and where the devout *Mahometans* repair in Crowds to pray \*.

Confess, my dear *Monceca*, that this Trick is pretty much upon the Square with some of the *Nazarene* Friars Pranks. We shall every where find that Superstition serves to gratify the Avarice of some Men who make a shameful Trade of their Religion, and disgrace themselves in the Opinion of Men of Sense, to whom their Knavery is not long a Mystery.

The *Egyptians* are yet more superstitious than the *Turks*, and the *Spaniards* are scarce a Match for them.

It

\* *Mallet's Account of Egypt. Part II.*

It would seem that, in all Times, this Country had been the Center of ridiculous Ceremonies, and served as an Example to other Nations, to shew them how far the human Understanding is capable of being deluded. The ancient *Egyptians* ador'd the vilest and most contemptible of Animals, Crocodiles and Ichneumons \*; nay, they even deified Plants. *O! happy Nation* (said *Juvenal* on purpose to banter that stupid People) *which sees their Gods grow in their Gardens* †. I can't conceive, my dear *Monceca*, how it was possible that a polite People, acquainted with the Sciences, and endowed with Genius, should entertain such extravagant Ideas of the Deity: That barbarous Nations should give into such Errors, is less surprising. A Man who can eat his Fellow-creature with as little Concern as he could a Chicken, may be guilty of the greatest Absurdities, without giving me the least Surprise: But that a People, among whom the Arts and Sciences flourish, who know and practise the best Laws of Morality, should give into the Absurdity of deifying a Calf, and carefully to feed it in a Temple, is what I can by no means conceive. For, how can it be imagin'd that a Man, who makes Use of his Reason, and raises his Capacity to the Pitch of measuring the Course of the Stars, and to foretel Eclipses by an exact Calculation, can really believe that a God has a Beginning and an End; and that he comes in the Form of a Calf to browse and chew the Cud, for the Space of twelve or fourteen Years? The Blindness of the *Greeks* and *Persians*, though very great, was not comparable to this!

*Cambyses*

\* *Egyptian Rats*, of the Bigness of a Cat, which steal into the Crocodile's Mouth when he gapes, and, eating his Bowels, kill him.

† *O sanctas gentes, quibus — nascuntur in hortis  
Numina!*

*Juv. Sat. XV. Ver. 10.*

*Cambyfes* being at *Memphis*, after his Conquest of *Egypt*, and not knowing upon what Account the People made publick Rejoicings, enquir'd into the Reason; and was much surpris'd to hear that they were celebrating the Festival of the God *Apis*, who at last was come to shew himself in publick. Upon this he sent for the Priests, and told them jestingly, that, if there was any God so humble as to appear among the *Egyptians*, he wonder'd why he should conceal himself from their King; and therefore order'd them to bring their God *Apis* to him. But how great was his Surprise when the Priests brought a Calf to him, at which he was so provok'd, that he drew his Dagger and plung'd it into the God's Thigh, who afterwards died of the Wound? *Ye wicked Miscreants*, (said he to the Priests) *are your Gods then compos'd of Flesh and Blood, and are they liable to be wounded? Really such a God is fit for the Egyptians; but I will take care that you shall get nothing by putting Tricks upon us* \*.

This noble Indignation of *Cambyfes* charms me: I see with Pleasure that a Pagan, surrounded with Idolatry, could perceive, by the meer Light of Reason, the Absurdity of the Divinity's being compos'd of Flesh and Blood. The wretched Priests who adored the Calf *Apis* were as much persuaded, as this Monarch, of the Meanness of their pretended God, whom they plainly saw decaying every Day; but they found their Account by imposing upon the credulous People.

Men have been, in all Ages, the same; that's to say, some have been so silly as to glory in their Deception, and others so cunning as to make the proper Use of their Brethrens Folly. Thus we may account for the Credit of *Apis* and of the *Egyptian* Priests, for that of the Oracles of *Delphos*, and of the Pagan  
Greek

\* *Herodotus*, Lib. I. Pag. 45. translated by M. du Ryer.

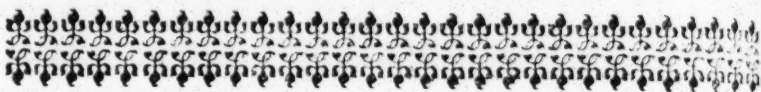
*Greek* and *Roman* Pontiffs ; and, in short, of a great many *Nazarene* Chimera's, and of the Monks their Inventers. Time does not destroy Errors, it only changes and new-forms them ; and though in every Age Men of Merit and Learning endeavour to withstand the Torrent of Superstition, yet they are commonly the Victims of their Zeal, and mostly oppress'd by those very People whom they want to cure of their Blindness. In all Religions the Vulgar favour those most who excel in inventing Chimera's and Fables. Thou, thyself, knowest what a hard Task it was to make our Brethren, the *Jews* of *Constantinople*, relish thy Opinions which attack'd certain Traditions, as being contrary to the Scriptures, and apt to seduce the Mind. The *Mahometans* despise the *Arabian* Doctors, because they are Enemies to Miracles and Superstition. The Works of the famous Author, *Macrifi*, are far less esteem'd than the ridiculous Fables of several *Mollas* and *Imans*. The *Turks* brand that Author with want of Religion, because he has related but very few Miracles, and even confuted several. They can by no means bear with his asserting, that 'tis downright Madness to believe the Dead can return from the other World. It went hard with *Savonarola*, a *Dominican* Friar, for having publicly exposed the Abuses of the Court of *Rome*, and those of his Brethren. *Alexander VI.* Sovereign Pontiff, took an effectual Way to put a Stop to his troublesome Remonstrances, by causing him, with two of his Companions, to be hang'd at *Florence*. The Blindness of some People is so gross, and the Malice of others so base and villainous, that 'tis almost impossible to reclaim the latter, and to enlighten the former.

Our Charity, my dear Friend, obliges us to pray that Heaven would be pleas'd, by dispelling the Clouds of Ignorance, to lay open the horrid Cheats  
of



of Impostors, in so clear a Light, that People of the meanest Capacity may see the Delusion. In the mean time, let it be thy constant Care, as well as mine, to guard against Imposition, which will not a little contribute to the Tranquillity of Life.

*Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXXVIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

SOME Days ago, my dear *Isaac*, I wrote thee of the Dispute between the *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, about the Publication of a Book called the *Breviary*. This Affair is now entirely settled; for the contending Priests have submitted, and all is quiet: But this Calm will be of short Duration, and new Disputes will be brought upon the Tapis. The turbulent Spirit of the *Nazarene* Clergy cannot bear with Tranquillity; and to debar the Monks of caballing, is to punish them in a most terrible Manner, They exercise themselves in bawling Disputations, and have proper Masters to instruct them in this Way of fighting.

A young Monk is train'd up at *Paris* as a young Gladiator was in ancient *Rome*. His Regents in Philosophy and Theology teach him how to elude Truth, by proper Evasions; and, in the syllogistical Way, to render the most evident Things obscure. He fortifies himself with a Train of Distinctions, Divisions and Subdivisions; so that he becomes invincible, or, at least, is under no Apprehension

prehension of being obliged to submit to Reason or the Light of Nature. As soon as he has acquired this Talent, he begins to enter into the *Circus*, and to exercise it in the private Assemblies of his Order; and, at last, when he's entirely Master of the Art of attacking Reason, like another Knight-Errant, he sets out in quest of Adventures, and is a constant Attendant at the different *Theses* that are maintain'd: 'Tis thus they name certain publick Disputes held now and then in the Convents of the Monks. *Aristotle*, *Scotus*, and some other School-Philosophers, have more Credit in these Assemblies than Reason; and they laugh at Evidence, nay even Demonstration, if it is not approved by *Aristotle*, or if it be condemn'd by *St. Thomas*.

Good Sense is a Fool that must be silent, and not pretend to combate the Opinion of Philosophers to whom certain Monks are attach'd. In all these Assemblies and Disputes, he that has the best Lungs still comes off Conqueror.

Thou would'st be astonish'd, my dear *Isaac*, to see with what Impudence these pretended Philosophers deny the most evident Things; and I'm persuaded that their odd Distinctions would put thee out of all Patience. I am not at all surpris'd if Philosophy was formerly despis'd in *France*: What could People of Sense think of all that Rubbish of imaginary Entities, second Intentions, and so many other Impertinences, which, for a long Time, were the chief Study of all the Philosophers?

Two great Men\* were obliged to wrestle with the Crowd of Pretenders to Learning, in order to destroy Prejudices, and even to force them to open their Eyes, that they might see the Errors into which they were plung'd; but though they perceiv'd their Mistakes,

\* *Des-Cartes* and *Gassendi*.

Mistakes, the greatest Part were too head-strong and self-conceited to submit to Truth.

The Prejudices of certain ignorant and prepossess'd Monks would not much surprise me, but I can't conceive how People of Genius and Penetration could have been so far blinded as to believe, that *Aristotle* was given to Mankind, as a terrestrial Deity, to instruct them in all the Secrets of Heaven, which, with all its Designs and Operations, had been fully reveal'd to him. Is it possible to imagine, that such a learn'd Man as *Averroes* could harbour a Thought, far less write, of such Extravagancies \*.

If we look upon *Aristotle's* Philosophy to be infallible Truth, Men have no more Occasion to trouble themselves with puzzling Enquiries into the Nature of Things; all is comprehended in the Writings of the *Greek* Philosopher, and nothing that is new to be learn'd. *He is the supreme Truth, and the Oracle that is to instruct us in every thing that is possible to be known.*

*Gassendi* was the first who, in the last Century, had the Courage to attack *Aristotle's* Infallibility †, and he found almost as many Adversaries as the first *Jansenist* that appeal'd against the Bull *Unigenitus*. The polite Part of the World are oblig'd to him for having reviv'd a rational Philosophy to which a Gentleman may apply himself. This great Genius was followed by *Des-Cartes*, whose new System gave the finishing Blow to the School-Philosophy, and forced it to fly to the Monks, the only

\* *Aristotelis doctrina est summa veritas, quoniam ejus intellectus fuit finis humani intellectus, quare bene dicitur de illo, quod ipse fuit creatus, & datus nobis, divina providentia, ut non ignoremus possibilia scire.*  
*Averroes de Gener. Anim. Lib. V. Cap. I.*

† The first Work that made this learned Man known in the World, was his Book, *Adversus Aristotelicos*.

only People among whom it met with a favourable Reception. The truly Learned put the Sciences on so good a Footing, and the Publick conceived so good an Opinion of them, that fifteen Years after the Publication of *Des-Cartes's* Works, the very Women were better Metaphysicians than three Fourths of the Divines in the Kingdom. Since that Time Philosophy has been daily more and more in Vogue, and all the better Sort of People apply to it; even the Courtiers, surrounded with the Pleasures and Intrigues of a noisy Court, bestow daily some Minutes upon it; and several Magistrates unbend their Minds from the dry and toilsome Study of the Law, by reading of the Books of good Naturalists.

Since it has been thought no Crime to reject an Absurdity though advanced by *Aristotle* or *St. Thomas*, and since the Authority of those Philosophers has been forc'd to stoop to sound Reason, the Sciences, particularly Natural Philosophy, have been brought to great Perfection. The very mentioning now of the *Occult Qualities*, is plainly to confess our Ignorance of the Effects of a Thing; and besides the Obligation we lie under to the New Philosophy for the curious Discoveries that have been made, we're also indebted to it for preventing mistaken Notions as to the Extent of our Knowledge, or fancying that we understand what we are really ignorant of.

In the Manner that People study now, 'tis plain that, in thirty Years, more true and useful Discoveries may be made, than were before found out in two thousand. As People are now in the Method of arguing only upon clear Principles, and of admitting nothing, as certain, but what is evident, Reason, no more clouded by a Number of Errors, by which it was inflav'd, acts with more Liberty and Efficacy, and makes a more easy Pro-



gress in the Discovery of Secrets which it wants to unfold.

*Men* (says an eminent Philosopher) *not only run into many Errors, by attempting with a limited Understanding to resolve Questions that partake of Infinity, but also by racking their Brains upon Things that are far beyond their Reach.* This was the Error of the ancient Philosophy, that pretended to account for Things which human Understanding was not capable of conceiving. The School-Philosophers neglected solid Things, and only fed on Chimera's, or studied what was incomprehensible or insignificant; so that from a secret Vanity, and an immoderate Thirst after Knowledge, they boldly adventured to account for the most secret and impenetrable Things, and pretended to resolve, with Ease, several unintelligible Questions, depending on so many Circumstances, that the most penetrating Genius was not capable of discovering the Truth of them with Certainty, after Ages of profound Meditation, assisted by an infinite Number of Experiments.

Another Fault in the School-Philosophers was, their confused Method of studying. They applied themselves to ten different Sciences perhaps in one Day, not reflecting on the Nature of their Understanding, to employ it in the Search of Truth, nor considering that the Mind of Man, already too much confin'd, ought not to be diverted from its Meditations by new Objects, which often make it forget the former. All the Sciologists who are liable to this Fault, make vain Efforts to penetrate into Things that depend on a great many others, of which they have no Knowledge for want of due Reflection, and by reason of too much Distraction in their Studies.

*Des-Cartes* owed the most of his Discoveries to the Method which he followed in his Studies, of  
not

not allowing his Thoughts the Liberty of rambling to other Objects than those of which he intended to discover the Truth \*: So see we, that nothing can be more clear and distinct than the Ideas upon which are founded the Principles of his Philosophy. I'm very sensible, that this great Man was not infallible; and that his Writings, full of Truths of which the Knowledge is entirely owing to him, are nevertheless in some Parts liable to human Weakness.

But 'tis ridiculous to imagine, that a Philosopher must write nothing but what is evident. If he gives doubtful Things as doubtful, and only proposes them to his Readers as meer Conjectures, who can blame him?

If the School-Philosophers had been but as honest and modest as *Des-Cartes*, a great many Errors, warmly maintain'd for Ages together, would have been acknowledged long since. In place of the vain Disputes, which only served to perplex Reason, the Learned would have honestly and fairly communicated their Reflections to one another, and perhaps clear'd up what they did not conceive, though they strenuously disputed for and against, as if each of them had been thoroughly convinced. Monstrous large Volumes were written full of Words, which were of no Use to the Understanding. A plain Question in Natural Philosophy, clear'd up in two Pages by *Des-Cartes*, would have taken up a large Book in Folio: However we must, in Justice to *Aristotle*, confess, that his *Natural Philosophy*, stripp'd of the whimsical Notions which his various Commentators have added to it, is much more tolerable; and, without Exaggeration, it may even be said, that this Philosopher was endowed with a capacious Genius. What he has said of the *Passions* in his *Rhetorick*, is extremely

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\* Mallebranche's *Search after Truth*, Lib. I. Pag. 102.

ly good; and there are very many excellent Things both in his *Political* and *Moral Tracts*: But as to his eight Books of *Natural Philosophy*, there's nothing in them new, or what any Person can be ignorant of. What Man is there who does not know that, for Matter to acquire a new Form, it must necessarily not have had it before? Who doubts that every thing depends upon Form, and that Matter alone does nothing? A Man is surely no wiser after he knows these Things, than he was before; so that his eight Books, as they are stuff'd with Definitions of general and indefinite Terms, conveying but confused Ideas to the Understanding, rather appertain to Logick than to Physicks. He says indeed that there are four Elements, Fire, Air, Water and Earth; but no just Idea can be form'd of the Nature of them from all his Reasonings: *He even denies that these Elements are the Fire, Air, Water and Earth which we see*, because in that Case our Senses must necessarily communicate some Knowledge of them to us; and as they do not, he endeavours to explain them by the Qualities of Heat, Cold, Humidity, Drought, Weight and Levity. How could Men of Understanding be satisfied with an Explication so indeterminate and loose, and which is attended with so many ridiculous Impertinencies? After all, this is not so surprising, since they had such a Deference to the Opinions of that Philosopher, as to admit of Nothing's being the first Principle of Things. For what is the Privation of Being, but a Nothing, a meer Nothing?

*Montagne* has cast the Horoscope, and foretold the Downfal of *Aristotle's* Philosophy, at a Time when the *Nazarenes* look'd upon his Principles as infallible Oracles. *Before* (says this Author \*) *the Principles that Aristotle introduced came to be in Vogue,*

\* *Montagne's Essays*, Lib. V. Pag. 141.

*Vogue, other Principles contented human Reason as they now do. What Letters-Patent, what special Privilege, can they plead to stop the Progress of our Invention, and to engross our Belief for all Times to come? They are liable to be kick'd out of Doors as well as those of our Ancients. What Montagne said has happen'd. He foresaw that Reason would at length pierce through the Cloud: He himself despised Aristotle's Philosophy, because he knew all the Defects of it.*

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; be content, and then thou hast Philosophy enough to make thee happy.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXXIX.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

**T**HY Remarks upon the Manners of the *French* were extremely useful to me in a Journey from *Lyons* to *Montpellier*, where I arrived two Days ago; for had I known nothing of them before hand, I should have had a strange Opinion of most of the People with whom I travell'd.

I took the Opportunity of the Passage-boat from *Lyons* to a Bridge upon the River *Rhosne*, called *Pont St. Esprit*. This Boat resembled *Noah's Ark*, not only in Shape, but in the Medley of Creatures that it contained, Priests, Monks, Nurses, Soldiers, Officers, Merchants, Bawds, Whores, Dogs, Cats, Squirrels, and creeping Animals of all Sorts. I endeavour'd to get into a Corner as far as I could



from two young Fellows who made a terrible Racket which of them should have the next Place to a young Female, tolerably handsome, who, infinitely pleased with this Effect of her Charms, laugh'd heartily at their Quarrel: A visible Gaiety and Satisfaction appear'd in her Countenance; and, by her disdainful Way of looking at the other Women, she plainly told them, that her Merit richly deserved such Contest.

During this Dispute, an old Officer, who fate between a Friar and me, began to light his Pipe. He was a Weather-beaten Son of *Mars*, and not at all pleased with the bulky Corporation of his Neighbour the Monk, which very much straiten'd him: But he was soon deliver'd of this troublesome Companion; for upon the first Whiff, the Reverend Father, not accusom'd to the Smell of Tobacco, made strange Faces, which the Officer perceiving, blew the Smoak full in his Mouth, and was like to throw him into Convulsions: However, he still stood his Ground, being loth to quit a Post that he had chose as the best in the Boat. The Officer finding that nothing would do, and that his bulky Neighbour would die before he yielded, resolved to attack him with Rallery, as well as Funking: "Father, (*said he*) I fancy you have an Aversion to Tobacco. Oh! (*said the Monk, who thought the Officer was going to lay down his Pipe*) I have a mortal Antipathy to it. If that be the Case, (*said the Warrior, very gravely*) I'd advise you never to "smoak;" and, with the Advice, gave him two such Mouthfuls that the poor Friar was almost suffocated. After a Quarter of an Hour's Coughing, enough to kill a Horse, he called to the Waterman: "Friend, (*said he*) the Orders are, that "none shall smoak in your Boat; see that they be "obey'd. You are in the right, (*said the Master*) "and I hope the Gentleman will be so good as

" to

“ to leave off Smoaking. Hark-ye, Fellow, (*replied the Officer*) all I can do for thy Service  
“ is, to give thee a hearty Drubbing, and then to  
“ throw thee into the River: A fine Jest indeed!  
“ that such a Scoundrel as thou art should pretend to command where I am! Sir, (*said he, turning towards me*) don’t you think it a little  
“ odd that, after having serv’d the King my Master  
“ thirty Years upon a Stretch, I shall not have the  
“ Privilege of smoaking before a Lay-brother?  
“ Lay-brother! (*replied the Monk*) I would have  
“ you to know, Sir, that I have been longer a  
“ Priest than you have been an Officer. Very well,  
“ (*said the Captain*) if it be so, you may say Mass,  
“ or sing Vespers, as much as you please, I shan’t  
“ hinder you.”

The Friar, however, still insisted on the Boatman’s executing his Orders. “ Why truly, most  
“ Reverend Father, (*answer’d he*) you who can  
“ preach, endeavour to persuade the Gentleman;  
“ ’tis none of my Business to quarrel with my  
“ Betters: I have been baptiz’d already, and am  
“ not fond of being tofs’d over-board; but if a  
“ simple Man’s Advice can be of any Weight,  
“ try to excommunicate him, and, my Life for’t,  
“ he’ll cry *peccavi*.” This Rallery of the Skipper,  
who wanted to pacify the Officer, put the Monk out  
of all Patience; so that he abandon’d his Post, and  
retir’d to a remote Corner of the Boat. “ You’re  
“ perhaps a Stranger (*said the Officer then to me*)  
“ to this Monkish Race: They’re as troublesome  
“ to Travellers, as Creditors to young Fellows;  
“ and, were we to be ruled by them, we should  
“ be obliged to constrain ourselves in every thing  
“ that they don’t like.”

While the Officer talk’d in this Strain, the Boat  
stopp’d at the Dining-place; and the Monk, when  
we were got out, accosted me in a very courteous  
Manner,

Manner, and ask'd me what I thought of our Officer's Behaviour? "The Men of that Profession  
 " (*continued he*) are insupportably brutal and haughty, and shew no Regard to Persons that deserve  
 " the greatest Respect. It looks as if they thought  
 " they had a Right to treat those with whom they  
 " happen to be in Company, as they would the  
 " King's Enemies; for my part, I had rather chuse  
 " to travel with half a Score Pedlars, than one of  
 " these Man-slayers."

Scarce had the Monk left me when I was attack'd by one of those young Fellows who had made such a Bustle to be near the young Wench. "I  
 " was sorry, Sir, (*said he*) to see you so badly  
 " placed this Morning in the Boat: These Friars  
 " know nothing but to mutter about their Breviary,  
 " and those old military Heroes are eternally bawling, or surfeiting your Ears with their warlike Exploits; had you been in our Corner, you would  
 " have been very well diverted: I would advise  
 " you to change your Place after Dinner, if you  
 " love Laughing and Mirth."

A tall, lean Man, who had not spoke one Word all the Way, shrugg'd his Shoulders, and lifted up his Eyes, at the Discourse of this hair-brain'd Coxcomb; and, as I was returning to the Boat to fetch something I had forgot, took that Opportunity to speak to me in private. "Sir, (*said he*) permit  
 " me, as a Fellow-Traveller, to give you a Piece  
 " of Advice: Take care not to place yourself  
 " near that young Fellow, or expect to hear more  
 " impertinent and nonsensical Questions in two  
 " Hours, than ever you met with in all your Life.  
 " I speak by Experience. 'Twas my Misfortune  
 " to be near him in the Boat, and, what with  
 " Talking, Singing and Whistling, he has made  
 " me quite deaf; sometimes all the three at once,  
 " and as if these had not been enough, he often  
 " adds

“ adds a fourth: So that you have him dancing  
“ and capering, talking, whistling and singing, all  
“ at the same Time. In short, never did the Sun  
“ shine on a more petulant, unaccountable Mor-  
“ tal.” The Tone of the Man’s Voice, his grave  
Countenance, and his *Don Quixote*-like Figure, gave  
me some Curiosity to know more about him; and  
therefore, after returning him Thanks for his Ad-  
vice, I ask’d him about his Journey, and where he  
design’d? “ I am going (*said he*) to *Montpellier*,  
“ upon account of a troublesome Distemper that  
“ I’m afflicted with; and what still augments my  
“ Grief is, that I have not deserv’d it: In short,  
“ I bear the Punishment of my Wife’s Transgres-  
“ sions. How, Sir, (*said I*) is it possible to ima-  
“ gine that your Spouse could have hurt you? If  
“ she has been really the Occasion of what you  
“ suffer, it must not have been by Design. I’ll  
“ tell you, (*replied he*) in a few Words, the Cause  
“ of my Misfortunes.

“ From my Youth I have applied myself to the  
“ Study of Philosophy, and endeavour’d to pene-  
“ trate into the Nature of Things; at length, after  
“ great Pains and Patience, I thought it was time  
“ to join Practice to the Theory. I prepared my  
“ Furnaces, manag’d my Fire, and began to exe-  
“ cute what I had learn’d with so much Study and  
“ Labour. The constant Attendance I was tied  
“ down to in my Laboratory about the grand Work,  
“ gave me no Time to inspect into my Wife’s Con-  
“ duct, who, perceiving me in such a fair Way of  
“ making Gold, was resolv’d likewise, on her Part,  
“ to be rich too: She could think of no better Ex-  
“ pedient than to have several Lovers; and indeed,  
“ by her artful and prudent Management, she ac-  
“ quir’d, in a very little Time, a very large Estate.  
“ ’Tis true, that among the Presents which she  
“ received, some of them were of such a Nature,  
“ that



" that to repair the Damage done by *Venus*, she  
 " was obliged to sacrifice to *Mercury*: But what  
 " was worst of all, before the Influences of the  
 " God took Effect, my Bones were almost rotten.  
 " My Wife fearing that I should resent this Injury,  
 " thought it safest to make an Elopement with a  
 " Poet of my Acquaintance, and to what Part of  
 " the World they have steer'd their Course I know  
 " not; but that does not much trouble me, only  
 " that I am forced to abandon my Furnaces for  
 " some Time to go and seek a Remedy for my  
 " Distemper, Health being one of the principal  
 " Things that a Virtuoso ought to be possess'd of  
 " who hopes to find out the Philosopher's Stone."

I was overjoy'd, my dear *Monceca*, to meet with  
 a Person that I could talk with concerning the  
 Stories that are told about the pretended Philoso-  
 pher's Stone. " Is it really possible, Sir, (*said I*)  
 " that Man can fully accomplish this great Work?  
 " I must confess, that hitherto I look'd upon all  
 " that has been said about this Science to be meer  
 " Fable. You're under a Mistake (*said he*): 'Tis  
 " true, God has granted the Power of attaining to  
 " the perfect Knowledge of so precious an Art  
 " but to few, nevertheless its Reality is not a  
 " Thing to be doubted of; and 'tis certain, that  
 " there is more of this Gold made in *Europe* by  
 " Artists, than what is brought from *Pern*, *Mexico*,  
 " or any other Parts of the World. All the Di-  
 " rectors of the Mints in *France* own, that every  
 " Year they receive more of this Gold and Silver  
 " than is imported from foreign Countries: And  
 " the most skilful Goldsmiths make no Doubt  
 " but that there are such Artists, who make Gold  
 " much more perfect than what is extracted from  
 " the Mines, and pretend to know it perfectly  
 " well.

" The

“ The Operation of the Philosopher’s Stone (*continued the Chymist*) is very possible, and I hope  
“ in time to make a happy Experiment of it. ’Tis  
“ true, that to attain to it a Man must go through  
“ a terrible Drudgery : In the first place, The Artist  
“ must be thoroughly acquainted with Nature,  
“ have a Stock of Patience that will support him  
“ under all cross Accidents, and a vigorous Con-  
“ stitution that can endure Labour and Toil :  
“ Should any one of these Qualities be wanting  
“ in him who attempts to find this grand Arca-  
“ num, he struggles in vain, and Disappointment  
“ must be his Fate. May I presume (*said I to the*  
“ *Chymist*) to ask you, If, by pursuing the Prin-  
“ ciples which are laid down in the Books that  
“ treat of this Science, one may hope to arrive at  
“ Perfection? There are few good Books (*said he*)  
“ in the great Number of those which are very  
“ much cried up, and which are composed by  
“ Cheats and Impostors, who dishonour this pre-  
“ cious Art. Of all our Authors, King Geber is  
“ the most learn’d and the most distinct ; yet a  
“ Man must be a good Philosopher, and perfectly  
“ understand Nature, to conceive his Meaning.  
“ According to that great Man, the true Way of  
“ attaining to Perfection is, *To incorporate the mi-  
“ neral Spirits, purified by Art, with the perfect  
“ Bodies of the Metals, first render’d volatile, and  
“ then fix’d, taking care to preserve all the radical  
“ Moisture, and augmenting the natural Heat by a  
“ reasonable Concoction of the Compound, which is  
“ form’d by this wonderful Fermentation, and which  
“ causes the whole Mass to boil and ferment ; so that  
“ the Compound insinuates itself into the most subtle  
“ Parts of the melted Metal, purges it of all its  
“ Dross, brings it to due Maturity, and changes it  
“ at last into pure Gold. I wish (*said I to the Chy-  
“ mist*) that your Experiments may prove success-  
“ full,*

“ful, and that you may have better Luck in Search  
 “of the Philosopher’s Stone, than you have had  
 “in Matrimony. By your way of talking, I per-  
 “ceive that you are thorough Master of the Art  
 “which you profess; yet I have heard several able  
 “Philosophers say, that the Beginning of it was  
 “deceitful, the Middle of it painful, and the End  
 “of it Beggary.”

The Chymist endeavour’d to make me alter my Opinion, and assur’d me, that the Search after this Secret (provided it was made with Diligence and Courage) could not miss of being at last crown’d with such Success as would infinitely surpass the greatest Pains and Labour. He own’d, however, that he had already spent three Fourths of his Estate; but hoped to compass the Work before he had consumed the Remainder. He only waited for a Return of Health to rekindle his Furnaces, and to bring his Composition to the utmost Degree of Perfection. I found him so infatuated and prepossess’d in favour of his Art, that to pretend to cure him was Labour in vain. I had several other Conversations with him before we came to this City, in all which he was continually extolling the Excellence of the Philosopher’s Stone: But since our Arrival I have not seen him, which I attribute to his being, perhaps, already in the Hands of the *Æsculapii*; of which in my next.

Let us, my dear *Monceca*, be content with the Profits of honest Industry, which are real, and never give in to Schemes that waste what we have, to procure what we cannot get. *Adieu.*

*Montpellier, \*\*\*\*\**



LETTER



## LETTER LXXX.

AARON MONCECA *to* JACOB BRITO.

*PARIS* may be as justly call'd the Center of Ridicule, as it is of good Taste and Politeness; and, consequently, may be said to contain the two opposite Extremes, which have each a great Number of Adherents. The Sciences, 'tis true, are in great Esteem, and carefully cultivated by the better Sort; but 'tis as true, that Folly, here, finds Tools fitter for her Purpose than any where else, and in such Numbers, that they often counter-balance the Authority and Decisions of Men of Sense, and easily draw the honest, unthinking Part along, who greedily swallow the Bait prepar'd to undo them. This is chiefly owing to the Power and Influence of weak and prejudic'd Fanaticks, who make good Sense groan under Oppression, and determine Men of the greatest Abilities to let Error take its Swing. I'm sensible that it must be very tiresome for Men of true Learning, to be ever reading Lectures to a Parcel of conceited Fools, who are often so obstinately impertinent, as to despise the most useful Discoveries, and the most perfect Works. But the most surprising Thing of all is, that, among the Party opposite to the Learn'd, we sometimes find Persons of Genius, Penetration, and a good Share of Learning. This, at first View, will appear to be a strange Paradox; but when



thou reflectest upon the fantastical Humour of Men, how the greatest Part of them itch after Singularity, and how fond they are of distinguishing themselves by maintaining the most extraordinary Opinions, thou'lt be no longer surpris'd to see Men of Learning not only wink at the Fooleries of the common People, but even invent new ones.

A *Nazarene* Friar \* maintain'd the wildest System that the most distracted Brain could possibly hatch, and yet he was a Man of Wit, and wrote well; but he wanted to be the Head of the most impertinent Sect that ever rose against the Ancients. He did not give himself the Trouble of sifting out the Faults which might be found in their Works, but cut the Matter short, by asserting, that the old Books, whether *Greek* or *Latin*, were only the Manuscripts of certain Monks who had borrowed the Names of the ancient Authors. For Example, he denied that the *Æneid* which we have was written by an Author who lived in the Time of *Augustus*: Nevertheless, among the Writers whom he was pleased to call *Apocryphal*, the Works of *Pliny*, the Naturalist, were spared, and sometimes quoted, to support his wretched Arguments; but for all the *Nazarene* Doctors there was no Quarter.

So foolish a System, and for which this Monk was graduated the *Prince of Madmen*, was attack'd and confuted, to all Intents and Purposes, by several learned Men †: But yet, absurd as it was, and contrary to good Sense and the Light of Nature, People were not wanting who strenuously supported

\* Father Hardouin, the Jesuit.

† See particularly the *Vindicia veterum scriptorum contra F. Hardouinum*, by the celebrated Mons. *Le Croze*. See also the *Miles Macedonicus* of the learn'd *Norris*. The Reasons which put Father *Hardouin* upon the Invention of this extravagant System, are pretty well explain'd in the IVth Letter of the *Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters*; but as the Passage is too long to be put down here, I must refer the Reader to the Book itself.

supported it. The Love of Singularity and Novelty brought it into Vogue with the *French*, and even with *Foreigners*; and its Reign continu'd till Reason regain'd its Ascendant, and dissipated the Delusion.

It must be the Height of Stupidity to imagine, that the *Greek* and *Latin* Authors which are extant were compos'd at *St. Denis*, in a Convent of Monks; where, according to this Impostor, all the Works of Antiquity were forg'd. Now, I'd gladly know how the *Greeks*, who possess'd from Father to Son the M.SS. of their Authors, came to agree to burn and destroy them, and to receive others forg'd, in their Names, in this Monastery? Allowing that *Zenophon*, *Homer*, *Pindar*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, *Diodorus* of *Sicily*, &c. had been wrote over again, how could they find their way into the Libraries of the *Greeks*, which were at that Time full of those Authors? How were the Counterfeits truck'd for the true ones? But, perhaps, it will be said, That there was no Book in *Greece*, and that the *Greeks* could neither read nor write some time after *Constantine*. Upon the Supposition of this Absurdity, and no otherwise, can the Foundation of this System be supported; for, if it be allowed that the *Greeks* had Eyes, and could both read and write, by consulting their latest Authors, who have wrote in our own Days, and from them going back successively to the most ancient, we shall find that they have quoted one another, and reported Passages out of those that have wrote before. The Authors of the XIVth Century have quoted those of the XIIIth, and those of this Century their Predecessors of the XIIth and XIth; so that, by thus ascending, we at last arrive at the Source of the Originals rejected. I would fain ask, At what Time there was the least Appearance of the Forgery of the ancient Authors? How can

it be imagin'd that the *Greeks* were so complaisant as to receive, for authentick, Writings of Authors whom they saw sprung up in one Night like Mushrooms, and of whom they had no Knowledge? I would likewise ask, What they must have said when they saw Works start up all of a sudden, of which they could never have had the least Notion? Is it possible that all Men, by common Consent, should have given implicit Credit to those Writings; and that not one of them should, at least, have shewn the same Diffidence as the Friar *Hardouin*? Surely there was Room for it; and were any now to say, that the *Medea* of *Ovid* and the *Thyestes* of *Varus* are recover'd, tho' the Thing may possibly happen, yet how strictly would those Pieces be examin'd? how many Men would employ their Pens, *pro* or *con*, either to prove them genuine, or to explode them? The Works of *Petronius* are an evident Proof of this Fact.

They who set up for this ridiculous System, which calls into Question, and renders suspicious the valuable Remains of Antiquity, fly to the Ignorance of the Times in which those Authors were counterfeited: But pray remark, my dear *Brito*, how one Absurdity leads to another. What Folly, or rather what Stupidity, is it to believe, that the Works of *Demosthenes*, *Quintilian*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Persius*, &c. are the Productions of an Age involved in Ignorance \*? Can it enter into the Imagination

\* This Passage wants to be more clearly explain'd: For among the few Works which Father *Hardouin* looks upon as really ancient, he admits of the Satires and Epistles of *Horace*, and *Virgil's Georgicks*; but absolutely rejects all the former's Odes, and the latter's *Aeneid*. He pretends to have discover'd that, I don't know how many Years ago, several Persons join'd their Heads together to compose the ancient History, which was entirely lost. He knows the exact Period of Time in which those People liv'd, as well as the precise Place where they compos'd their Works, and allows them no other Monuments of

Antiquity

nation of any Mortal, that Stupidity and gross Ignorance should produce that which the profoundest Learning and the most painful Study could scarce imitate? The eminent Historians of this Age have the same Veneration for *Titus Livy* as *Statius* had for the *Æneid*, which he in a manner ador'd \*.

Only consider, my dear *Brito*, what sort of People they set up for Authors of Works, whose Politeness and Delicacy are still Patterns to the nicest Courtiers of this Age. Monks are made the Composers of the *Heroides*, and of *Ovid's Art of Love*; and meer Dunces made the Inventors of *Demosthenes's Philippics*, and of *Plutarch's Works*. But some of these religious Coxcombs concern'd in the *Republick of Letters*, tell us, That the Men who compos'd those Works had Wit, and that they who bought and received them were Fools. The Question in that Case is, If it was possible that Genius should be confin'd to seven or eight Persons shut up in one House? If it be answer'd, that good Sense and Knowledge were not confin'd to one single Monastery, it must be acknowledg'd, that other learn'd Men, dispers'd in different Parts of *Europe*, and who there compos'd the Works that we have now extant, would have made some mention of those Forgers of the ancient Writings.

R 3

Upon

Antiquity for Helps but *Cicero*, *Pliny*, *Virgil's Georgicks*, and *Horace's Satires and Epistles*; with a few *Calendars* and *Inscriptions*. "Deprehendit ille — cælum certorum hominum ante sæcula  
"nescio quot extitisse, qui historia veteris concinnanda partes suscepissent.  
"qualem nunc habemus, cum nulla tunc extaret. Sibi probe notans  
"illorum aetatem, atque officinam esse, inque eam rem istis subsidio fuisse  
"Tullium, Plinium, Maronis Georgica, Flacci sermones & epistolas; nam  
"hec illa sola censet — ex omni latinitate sincera monumenta, præter  
"inscriptiones admodum paucas, fastosque nonnullos." — *Hardouini*  
*Chronol. ex nummis antiquis restituta prolus*, Pag. 60.

\* — Nec tu divinam *Æneida* tenta,  
Sed longe sequere, & vestigia semper adora;

Stat. Thebaid.



Upon the whole, I think that every Man, who espouses the System of this Friar *Hardouin*, must chuse whether he's to pass for a Fool or a Fanatick; and to endeavour to confute such a Heap of Absurdities, is shewing them too much Indulgence. One Reason why the Enemies of the ancient Authors suspect the Works of *Virgil* to be apocryphal, is this: *Pliny* the Naturalist (*say they*) speaks of a *Virgil*, Author of the *Bucolicks*, but says not a Word of the *Æneid*; and therefore the *Æneid* which we have, is not done by the same *Virgil* as the *Bucolicks*. I can scarce keep myself from laughing at this absurd way of Reasoning: By the same Rule it may be denied, thirty or forty Years hence, that the *Psalms* were translated into *French Verse* by *Marot*, because *Boileau*, who mentions the Works of that Poet, says nothing of this Version. What would the World think of a Man who, two or three hundred Years hence, should pretend to prove that the Tragedy of *Bajazet* was not written by *Racine*, because his Friend *Des-Preaux* spoke of all his other Plays, but made no mention of this, though one of that Author's best Pieces?

I make no doubt, my dear *Brito*, but that thy Imagination will be upon the Rack to find out the Reasons which determin'd this Monk to advance so surprising an Hypothesis. I was as much at a Loss about them as thou can be, and still remain'd in the Dark, till some learn'd Men of this Country let me into the Secret, by discovering the hidden Springs which set the frantick Brain of this Impostor a-working. He was a Member of a Society \*, directly opposite to another †, which has publish'd several Editions of the *Greek* and *Latin Nazarene Doctors*. These Books, universally applauded, have given Umbrage to *Hardouin's* Brethren;

\* That of the Jesuites. † The Congregation of St. Mary.

thren; and therefore he resolv'd to lessen their Authority, by calling into Question the Antiquity of the Authors, whose Works were no other, according to him, than the Productions of Monks, the Predecessors of those who now plead for their Antiquity: And thus he endeavour'd to render his Opinion less odious to the *Nazarenes*, who could not be supposed to sit easy under such a Contempt shewn for their ancient Doctors.

This is the true Origin of the ridiculous Opinion started in these latter Days against the most celebrated Writers, and embrac'd by some Ignorants who thought to pass for Wits, and to acquire Reputation by applauding such Impertinencies.

For some Years pass'd, *Paris* has afforded nothing new that deserves to be mentioned, but it won't continue long so: The inconsistent Humour of the *French* would soon furnish me with Variety to entertain thee, were I not intended to leave the Country soon and to go for *Brussels* in *Flanders*, where Business calls me, and from whence I shall not fail to write thee. In the mean time accept of my best Wishes for thy Prosperity.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



LETTER



## LETTER LXXXI.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

**I**N my last Letters I made some loose Remarks on the *Coptes*, the ancient Inhabitants of *Egypt*; but I shall now endeavour to be more particular. This People embrace the Doctrine of one named *Eutyches*, whom the *European Nazarenes* look upon to be an Arch-Heretick; they are extremely poor, and, though still pretty numerous, have no other Means of subsisting, but by keeping Books of Records of the arable Grounds, to which Office their Antiquity intitles them, and is all that they enjoy in their ancient native Country. There's scarce a *Turkish* Lord who has not a *Copte* for keeping a Register-book of his whole Estate.

The *European Nazarenes* here tell us, that the *Coptes* are of all People the most clownish, and the most obstinate in Error; but, for my part, I have conversed with several of them, and found that they have only the same Attachment that all Mankind have for the Opinions which they've suck'd in with their Mother's Milk. I don't know what Right an *European Nazarene* has to accuse a *Nazarene Copte* of Obstinacy; as they are equally influenc'd by the Prejudices of Education, their Defects or their Virtue must be put upon an equal Footing too. The Europeans tax the *Coptes* with a blind Submission to ancient Customs, call'd Canons, and with

with admitting the Opinions of their Bishops and Priests as the only Rules of their Conduct. But don't they agree in this with all *Nazarenes*, who have an implicit Faith in the Decisions of their Pontiffs, and acknowledge that they have no Right to dispute the Validity of what is determin'd by the Assemblies call'd *Councils*? Why would they require of the *Coptes* what they don't think themselves oblig'd to do? and for what Reason is the *Egyptian* more oblig'd to call into question, or even to examine, any of his Pontiff's Decisions before he believes them, than the *Nazarene*?

There's no denying but that People of Integrity are to be found in all Religions. A *Nazarene* believes, that he neither ought to examine, nor put his Faith to the Test of Reason. A *Copte* is in the same Sentiments, and has as much Faith in the Knowledge and Candour of his Pontiffs as the *Nazarene* can have in his; consequently both of them (according to their own Principles) ought to continue in the Religion which they profess, without examining or disputing about it; for I think it is very ridiculous that one should require of the other what he himself condemns.

Here lies, in my Opinion, the greatest Defect of the *Nazarene* Papist Religion. Reason and the Light of Nature, which Heaven has bestowed upon Men for their Conduct, become useless to them. The Moment a Pontiff has pronounced, 'tis done and done: Submission is the Word, and they must not so much as pretend to examine what is sometimes directly and visibly repugnant to good Sense.

Though the *Nazarenes* are sensible how far they turn themselves into Ridicule by such a Conduct, yet they make no Difficulty to brand others, who only imitate them, with the ignominious Names of *Rude* and *Obstinate*; and are so blind as not to perceive,



perceive, that the Arguments made use of against their Adversaries, are Weapons with which they furnish them. Should the *Coptes* say, *Are we wiser than our Ancestors? They believed as we do, why not imitate them* \*. The Missionaries, Jesuites and Nazarene Friars, would be so far from allowing the Example of Ancestors as an Authority for certain Customs, that they would immediately cry out: *Nothing is able to force the Intrenchment where Obstinacy is the Guard: Reason may make an Attempt, but the Fort is impregnable.*

I would gladly ask the Missionaries on what it is that they found the half, nay, even the three Fourths of their Customs and Ceremonies? I'm persuaded that, according to the laudable Practice of Papist *Nazarenes*, they would directly fly to Tradition, which is their *Bucephalus* in the Day of Battle, and brings them safely off when they can no longer sustain the Attack. What Injustice must it be to deprive others of Privileges which they allow themselves so liberally? How! shall it be allow'd in *Europe* to authorize, nay, even to consecrate a Custom, how ridiculous soever, if it has but the Sanction of the Ancients, and in *Africa* absolutely to forbid the same way of Thinking, under pain of passing for rustical and head-strong? Let them but shew me the Reason of this Privilege, and I'm ready to subscribe to their Sentiments; but till then I must be allowed to pity their Blindness, as well as that of the *Coptes*'s, or rather to despise the *Europeans*, because they can perceive the Abyss of Errors into which the others are plung'd, without guarding against the like unhappy Fate.

It must be however allow'd, my dear *Monceca*, that the *Coptes* are a despicable People: They often make a shameful Trade of their Religion; and

many

\* An Account of Egypt by Mr. Mallet. Part II. Pag. 63.

many of them, for a very Trifle, become Converts to the *Nazarene* Religion, which they abandon the Moment that they have no further Prospect of Interest from it, and so make good a common Proverb they have among them, *No Money, no Church*; *Maphis Fellou, mafis Quenisse*\*: And thus the Conversion of the *Coptes* may be compared to the Service of the *Swiss*, with whom the Proverb is, *No Money, no Swiss*. You may say what you will of their being plunged a-new into Heresy, they mind you not, but return to their Mother-Church with great Tranquillity, and tell you gravely, that while they were paid they pray'd as *Romans*, and Cash failing, no more Prayers: By which thoult be able to judge of the Benefit and Progress of the Missions so much cried up in *Europe*. The *French* who live here acknowledge, that no *Copte* ever died out of his own Religion; and that, sooner or latter, they all return to it: And 'tis ridiculous to imagine that it can be otherwise, considering the Hatred and Contempt that they have for the Religion of the *European Nazarenes*. From their very Infancy they hear nothing but Discourses to the Disadvantage of all Religions that are different from their own; they are inspir'd with Sentiments of Hatred to all the Opinions of Strangers, and 'tis impossible for them ever to get the better of their Prejudices.

In *Europe* the Understanding may be improv'd. The Sciences serve very much to deliver Reason from the Yoke that holds it in Captivity. By Study we learn to doubt, and Doubt naturally leads to the Search of Truth. In *Egypt* Ignorance adds new Strength to Prejudices, and render them invincible: And as Superstition and Ignorance go always Hand in Hand, the most romantick Fables, and the most extravagant Customs, appear to be admirable Things in the Eyes of a deluded People.

The

\* Mr. Mallet's Account of *Egypt*, Pag. 109.

The *Coptes*, as well as the *Nazarenes*, believe that their Priests, by pronouncing certain Words, can wipe off all the Stains of Sin. 'Tis true, they don't descend to Particulars as the others, but only accuse themselves in general of having transgressed in Thought, Word and Deed; and then the Priest pronounces the Word *Allahieramae* \*, which, with a small Present from the cleansed Sinner to the Person who has done this good Office, completes the whole Ceremony: For you must know, that the *Copte* Priests are as greedy as the *European* Friars; and it would seem that Avarice was an Evil inseparably attach'd to that Profession.

The *Coptes* are remarkably austere in their Fast-ing, and, in Imitation of us, eat only once a Day, and that after Sun-set. They have Images in their Churches, but never pray to them; they only look upon them as Representations or Monuments of Things pass'd: And I must frankly own, that I can't condemn Images as long as they make no other Use of them †. God in his Law has only commanded us not to render them a Worship which may tend to Idolatry ‡: He has not only allowed of their being placed in private Houses, but also in the Temple, and even in the Sanctuary, where two Cherubims were placed upon the Ark §.

Pictures

\* This Word signifies, *God forgive them.*

† I would beg of the Readers to consider, whether *Aaron Monceca's* Enemies can reasonably call him *Iconoclast*, and a Hater of Images.

‡ The Fathers of the Church, who have maintain'd the worshipping of Images, endeavour to prove their Opinion from the Figures that were placed in the Temple; but their Adversaries answer, that these Figures were never worshipped, and consequently that their Argument is of no Weight.

§ *John Damascenus*, in his *Defence of Images*, has not been unmindful of that Particular. *Quid autem dicis, arcam illam, urnam, propiti-*

Pictures are speaking Characters that represent the Events of pass'd Ages, or of our own Days. I can't allow myself to think, that the Use of pious Books will ever be condemned, or that they will be order'd to be expell'd out of the Temples; consequently if we look upon a Picture as a Book, which only serves to improve the Mind, by calling back to our Memory the Actions of illustrious and pious Men, the Use of it must be commendable. As there are many *Nazarenes* who cannot read, without the Assistance of Pictures and Images, the Books of the Ignorant, they can have no Knowledge of many pious and edifying Histories: And therefore I can't but condemn the extravagant Zeal of some People who, from a Motive of Devotion, have destroy'd and broke down Pieces of Sculpture and Painting worthy to be admir'd by all Men of Judgment and Taste. In my Travels through *Hungary*, and some other Northern Countries, I have been a melancholy Witness of this implacable Hatred against Images; but that Fury, which seem'd to introduce once more the Barbarity of the *Goths*, is now at End: For the *Nazarenes*, who are against the placing of Images in the Temples, only condemn the worshipping of them; and have no other Reason for removing them, but for the Danger there is that the common People, easily brought to Superstition, should run into Idolatry without knowing it.

'Tis very certain, that some *Nazarene* Papists do not adore Images, and believe, that their Religion orders them not to look upon them but as

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Things

*propitiatorium, non manibus esse affabrè confectà? Non esse opera manuum hominum? Non, uti censes, ex ignominiosi & aspernabili materia exsculpta sunt? Quid autem tabernaculum illud omne? Nonne imago erit? Nonne umbra & exemplar? Jo. Damascen. Apologetic. pro venerat. sanctar imagin. Lib. III. Pag. 78. The same Father had said but a little before, jubet autem (Deus) ut exsculptent similitudinem cherubim.*



Things that ought to rouse up their Devotion by the Ideas which they present to the Imagination; but 'tis no less certain, that none but the Persons of Judgment and Knowledge are confin'd to these just Bounds: The meaner Sort are prodigiously inclin'd to Idolatry, particularly those dull and stupid Mortals who are not capable of distinguishing betwixt Veneration and Worship. A Peasant may be found who, for the Sake of a Piece of Wood representing the Saint that happens to be the Patron of the Village, would undergo a thousand Deaths: He has long Conversations with him, and addresses his Prayers to him for a good Crop; and, in Exchange, promises to make him several Presents, being really persuaded that there's a supernatural Virtue in this Piece of Wood.

The Roguery of the Monks in publishing now and then some Miracles, contributes not a little to the Delusion of the People. They declare, that a certain Image has utter'd Words, and that another has moved its Eyes, or sweated Drops of Blood. Is not this to make the silly People believe that in these Statues there is something divine and supernatural? And is not this to push and induce them to Idolatry? What Peasant is there who, persuaded that such a Statue has often spoke, will not imagine that it hears too? consequently, the Figure is no longer a Representation which brings them to the Remembrance of some pious Man, but a Demi God, to whom he pays his Devotions as the Pagans did to *Mercury* or *Juno*. Thus the Avarice of Friars, who want to raise the Reputation of certain Images, and to discredit those of their Neighbours, in order to bring all the Customers to their own Temple, has made a Custom, in itself pious and useful to Mankind, become highly criminal.

What

What I tell thee would not, I'm persuaded, be agreeable to all our Brethren; they would be scandaliz'd, and should believe their Synagogues profan'd, were they to see Images and Pictures in them: But if thou'lt only reflect that we went out of *Egypt*, we parted from an idolatrous People, that we were apt enough to give into their Errors, and but weakly fortified against Idolatry, as appears by the *Golden Calf* raised up by our Fathers in the Desert, thou'lt be no longer surpris'd at the wise Precautions that *Moses* took to prevent our falling into Blunders. What a Happiness would it be to all Nations, had they but so wise a Conductor!

Adieu, my dear *Monceca*; may Happiness still attend thee.

*Cairo*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## L E T T E R LXXXII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I RECEIVED, my dear *Isaac*, thy Letter upon the Manners and Customs of the *Coptes*, descended of the ancient *Egyptians*. Their Debasement puts me in mind of that of the *Greeks*, *Romans* and *Carthaginians*; and I can't conceive how these four Nations, formerly so famous, are become the most despicable of the Universe.

The *Egyptians* were the first who knew and cultivated the Sciences and Arts. We know of no

such ancient Edifices as the Pyramids, which at the same time shew the Grandeur of those who caused them to be built, and the extraordinary Skill of the Architects. Nevertheless, two thousand Years ago, the Names of those who erected those stately Monuments were as little known as they are now, by which thou may'st judge of their Antiquity. The *Egyptians* traced it farther back than the Deluge: But, since the holy Books determine our Faith, it would appear that the Pyramids were built a few Years after the Flood. One Reason indeed seems to stand up against this Opinion; Could *Egypt* at that Time be so populous as to undertake such vast Buildings, which requir'd so great Labour, and such Numbers of Workmen? The Countries in the Neighbourhood of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* were the first that were inhabited by the Descendants of *Noah's* Children, and *Egypt* not till afterwards.

Some Persons pretend, that the Pyramids might, probably enough, have been built before the Deluge. But this Opinion is liable to many Difficulties, and seems to have nothing for it but the unknown Antiquity of these same Pyramids.

The Sciences were cultivated by the *Egyptians* Time out of Mind; and the Moment we have the least Knowledge of them, we perceive all the Marks that characterize the Antiquity of a Nation. We find a resolute Religion and Worship, Laws and Customs, which seem to be of an old Standing.

The Priests of that Nation were the first Philosophers, and 'tis pretended that they acknowledg'd *one God supreme, an all-perfect Being*. But I'm apt to think, that they never had any true Idea of the Deity; and that, when Men came to be plung'd into Idolatry, they had no longer any just Notion of God in whatever Country they lived. When I speak of Men I even mean the most knowing, among whom I rank the *Egyptian, Grecian* and  
*Roman*

*Roman* Philosophers; the former admitted of two Divinities, First and Eternal, viz. the *Sun* and *Moon*, which govern'd the whole Universe: They believed that the whole Mass of Nature was composed of the Substance of these two Stars, and that Spirit, Fire, Earth and Water, were Portions or Members of this Body \*. This is pretty much of a Piece with *Spinoza's Modifications*: And indeed the System of this apostate *Jew*, we may observe, was that of almost all the ancient Philosophers, who perplex'd and confounded it with several other Falshoods of their own Invention. So that, when we come to unravel this Chaos of false and loose Ideas, we shall find that the Pagans, who thought or said that there was but one God, knew him in the same Manner that they knew there was but one World, and consequently the God whom they believed in, was composed of a hundred thousand different Gods; since every thing that is material has necessarily Parts, and consequently is divisible. It must necessarily therefore have been, that every Part which composed the Divinity should be itself a God: For how absurd would it be to say, that a Thing divine is composed of Parts not divine? It would be no better nor worse than to maintain that thinking Matter (if such a Thing there can be) was composed of unthinking Parts.

We dare not say that any ancient Philosopher ever knew God's Spirituality †: None has been able to raise himself to so high a Pitch of Discerning. *Plato* is the only one to whom the Correspondence which he had with the *Jews*, has given some Idea of the

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Immate-

\* Ideoque totum naturæ universæ corpus Sole & Luna consummari: Cujus partes jam indicatae, spiritus, ignis, siccitas, humor, & aëria tandem natura: Equibus, ut in homine, caput, manus, pedes, & alias partes numeramus, eodem modo corpus mundi constat. *Diodor. Siculus*, Lib. I. Cap. II.

† See the *Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters*, Letter V.



Immateriality of the Deity; and yet we can't say that he truly knew it, since what he has said about it, far from being received by the other Philosophers, has been rejected by them as a Thing unintelligible, and contrary to Reason and the Light of Nature. *Cicero*, in examining the different Opinions of Philosophers about the Nature of God, passes by *Plato's* without stopping; and only says, *He has made God without a Body; his Reasoning is inconceivable* \*. But *Plato* himself had no Notion of the Divinity, but in a corporeal Manner: And the Spirituality which he attributes to the Supreme Being, is only a sort of Substance composed of a subtle fine Matter, which he believes to have been the Principle of all that has been created. How can we otherwise explain *ce verbe externe & proféré*, which is nothing else, according to this Philosopher, but the Matter which God ejected, or which he ingender'd to form the Universe? Is he not then a material God who ejects Seed? If the World be a Part of the Substance of God, as *Plato* pretends, admitting, in the first place, of a God Supreme, then of the visible God, Minister of the invisible God Creator of the World, who is the third God; does not this make out as many Gods as there are Parts in Matter? And may not this System be call'd a rough Draught of that of *Spinoza*?

'Tis my Opinion, that when Men fell into Idolatry God withdrew his Spirit from them, and from their Posterity; they had no longer any true Knowledge of the Deity, but only a faint Remembrance of some confused Ideas of a Divinity whom their Ancestors had forsaken.

This Principle, I know, leads to the Opinion, that we have no innate Idea of God: But I believe that a strict Examination of this Question must convince

\* *Quod Plato sine corpore Deum esse censet, id quale esse possit intelligi non potest. Cicero. de nat. Deor. Lib. 1.*

vince us that the Soul has no innate Idea of the Divinity, and that it only acquires what Knowledge it is capable of, by reflecting on many wonderful Things which could not have been perform'd but by an omnipotent Being: For were we to suppose, that the Soul had any such innate Idea, it could not possibly be false, and the Characters stamp'd by the Hand of the Almighty, could not be effaced. But the Pagans were so far from having an Idea conformable to that which ought to be entertain'd of the true God, that we are greatly surpris'd at the Errors and Mistakes into which they have given; and to this very Day several Nations adore the most despicable Things. The common Answer made to this Argument, which I look upon as demonstrative, is, that God imprints, in general, in the Heart of Man, the Idea of himself; but that it is afterwards corrupted by false Applications. This is certainly, my dear *Isaac*, a very poor way of Arguing; for what is more useless than these abstracted Ideas which suppose an antecedent Knowledge of Objects that resemble one another. Abstraction cannot be suitable to a first Idea, which ought to be pure and simple, and consequently by no means to that of the Deity. 'Tis absurd to say, that God communicates to us an Idea directly contrary to the Being of which he intends to give us Knowledge; and to alledge, that the extravagant Notions which the Pagans had of the Deity, proceeded immediately from God himself: We may as well maintain, that the Soul, in its Birth, brings along with it the Ideas of the most extravagant Things.

It may be easily made appear, my dear *Isaac*, that the Idea of the Deity not being innate with the Soul, there is none that can be so; for had the Supreme Being thought proper to communicate some Ideas to it directly, he would have, no doubt, chosen

chosen to give Man a clear and distinct Knowledge of the Deity, preferable to the Ideas of some general Principles of Morality.

If it be true that some of these Principles are born with us, why do Men think so differently about Things that constitute Good and Evil? and whence comes it that what is blameable in one Country, is look'd upon to be virtuous in another? The *Topinambou* Canibals think they open the Gates of Heaven by cruelly revenging themselves on their Enemies; and he that eats most of them, is accounted the most virtuous and bravest Man\*. The *Turks*, and above all the *Egyptians*, look upon Persons as Saints whom the *Nazarenes* would justly condemn to the Flames†: They bestow the greatest Honours on Monsters who make Humanity blush, and who are so corrupted that they have only the Figure of Men a thousand times more culpable than the People who were destroyed by a Fire from Heaven. The Pagans believed that the sacrificing of *Nazarenes* was an acceptable Service to their Gods. The *Portuguese* think they do Honour to Heaven by burning our Brethren. The *Molinists* offer to God the Torments which they make the *Jansenists* undergo. The *Drusi* of Mount *Libanus* marry their own Daughters, and one Day of the Year enjoy one another's Wives without Distinction‡. Where are in such Cases the innate Principles of Morality? Where is that Agreement which, by the Scheme of the Sticklers for innate Ideas, ought to be universal? Experience is against them,

\* *Jean de Lery. Chap. XVI.*

† *Audivimus hæc dicta & dicenda per interpretem Macrelo nostro in super sanctum illum quem eo loci vidimus, publicitè apprimè commendari eum esse sanctum, divinum, ac integritate præcipuum, eò quod, nec seminarum unquam esset, nec puerorum, sed tantummodo asellarum concubitor atque mularum. Baumgarten. Lib. II. Cap. I. Pag. 73.*

‡ See *Bespier's Remarks upon Ricant. Tom. II. Pag. 649.*

them, so all their philosophical Reasonings must vanish; and to deny a Thing known to every body who will give himself the Pains to consider of it, is to dispute for Disputing's Sake.

Some Persons think, that the Opinion of innate Ideas is useful, and necessary to prove the Existence of God; and cannot bear the rejecting of an Argument which they think decisive against the Atheists. *The Moment* (say they) *that we can prove there are Ideas innate with the Soul, Libertines are forced to acknowledge the Existence of a Deity; because the Soul in its Birth bringing along with it the Idea of a God, it must necessarily be God himself who has imprinted it.* They who reason in this Manner, don't perceive that 'tis begging the Question: For the Followers of *Spinoza* deny those Ideas, and all the Time employ'd in endeavouring to prove the Truth of them is consum'd in meer Chicane, which clears up nothing; whereas, should we go directly to the essential Reasons, we might easily convince People blind enough to deny a Thing of which we can as readily give them Proofs, as of their own Existence.

I scarce think that there can be any Atheist so foolish as to imagine that he has always existed, it must therefore follow that something has been before him; and, by Retrogression from one to another, we shall find that something has been from all Eternity: For it would be the Height of Folly to maintain that Nothing can produce a real Being. Now, that Being which has ever existed must necessarily be all powerful, since it is the Source and Principle of all other Beings, and that they owe to its Bounty their Power and Faculties; and therefore, by a natural Consequence, this first Being must also be intelligent, since Man finds he himself is such. From whence then could he, who is created by an eternal Being, have drawn this Intelligence,

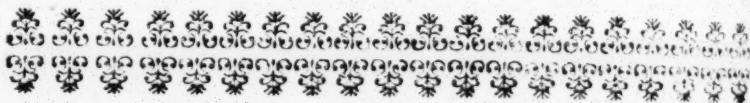


telligence, if not from that very Eternal Being? Therefore he must not only be Omnipotent, but also Intelligent.

What Occasion have we for innate Ideas to prove invincibly the Existence of God? What is an eternal Being, sovereignly powerful and intelligent, if it be not God?

Farewel, my Friend; may thou be content, and abound with Things that make Life happy.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXXXIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I WAS Yesterday at a publick Diversion that I had never seen before. The Chevalier *de Maisin* conducted me to the Masquerade, which is an Assembly that may furnish a Philosopher with Matter enough to reflect upon for thirty Years. I shall in this Letter endeavour to give thee an Idea of it to the best of my Capacity. Thou knowest the Form of Opera-halls, having seen at *Vienna* just such as they have at *Paris*. When they intend to fit them up for a Ball, the Stage and Pit are put upon a Level; and the Side-boxes that surround this new sort of Parterre, are fill'd with Masques, who often come to the Ball for other Reasons than to dance, or to see dancing; Business of greater Consequence draws them hither: And 'tis here that the Lover and his Mistress, under different

rent Disguises, laugh at the useless Vigilance of a jealous Husband. He may be as much upon the Watch as he pleases for a whole Year, one single Ball destroys all his Precautions. In the Crowd of Masques the Dutcheß is confounded with the Citteß, and the Shop-keeper with the Man of Quality: And 'tis in this happy Place where Love, Joy and Pleasures, are equally the Privilege of every Mortal.

The *Parisians* have a profound Respect for every Person that has a Masque on: The Mistakes which have sometimes happen'd render them very prudent. If they were less circumspect, they would often fail in the Regard due to Persons of Distinction, by too much Familiarity.

In a Country where Gallantry and Love are the principal Business of three fourths of the Inhabitants, what comical Adventures do these Masquerades afford. A young married Lady, whose morose, peevish Husband richly deserv'd the unhappy *Vulcan's* Fate, impatiently waited for the Ball to qualify him for his Admission into the hornified Fraternity, and to indemnify herself, in the Arms of a passionate Lover, of the languid Embraces of a jealous Fumbler: But as it was no easy Matter to deceive this watchful *Argus*, who haunted her Night and Day, she could think of no better Way than to give him the Slip for a few Minutes in the Crowd and Hurry of the Ball; accordingly, a Billet-doux was sent to her Lover to let him know that he would find her in the third Box on the Right Hand of the Stage, dress'd in a green Domino. You may judge of the Gallant's Impatience for the Hour of Rendezvous: When Eleven struck, he ran, or rather flew, to the Opera, and, throwing his Eyes towards the Place where he was to find his Treasure, saw a Masque dress'd in a green Domino, and never doubted but it was his Angel: He made but one  
Jump

Jump to the happy Place, and said all the tender Things that Love can inspire; but the disguis'd Goddess made no Answer, which strangely surpris'd our Inamourato, and turn'd all his warm Expressions into Sighs, Groans and Tears. *What, (said he) Madam, is this the happy Moment I had so passionately wish'd for? Did you only let me know that you were to be here, to have the Satisfaction of piercing my Heart? For God's Sake! let me know in what I have displeas'd you? How! no Answer! this Silence kills me. Alas! is this the Reward of so much Love and ———* The Cavalier would have gone on in this plaintive Strain, had not the masqu'd Lady burst out into a loud Laughter, which surpris'd our Lover; but much more, when, in the laughing Lady unmasqu'd, he found his own dear Wife: Yet, as Infidelity in Matrimony is no very extraordinary Thing in *France*, and that a fickle Husband is no Phenix there, he soon recover'd himself, laugh'd at the Mistake, and went in quest of the *Belle*. His Wife had come to the Ball before his Mistress, and having the same Dress, and going into the same Box, with perhaps a Design to meet some more agreeable Companion than an Husband, it was no Wonder that this double Disappointment happen'd.

This Adventure my Friend the Chevalier told me, and likewise another no less merry. A Farmer-General had conducted his Mistress to the Ball: He thought he had no Rival, but was mistaken; for a Captain of Dragoons was the favourite Lover, and the other's Happiness was owing to his Guineas. The fair Lady, having given her Keeper the Slip in the Crowd, went out to pass a Quarter of an Hour in an Hackney-Coach with the Officer: These Vehicles are the happy Retreats which serve for Sanctuaries to Lovers during the Ball. The Farmer-General feeling himself under some Motions  
of

of Concupiscence, thought that the shortest way to banish the Temptation, was to succumb to it; so that he run up and down the Hall in quest of his *Dulcinea*, whom he at last, as he thought by the Dress, found, surrounded with a Crowd of Masques: He took her by the Hand, and proposed to go out for a little, to which she consented, and stepp'd along without saying a Word; but upon the Stair whom should they meet but the Captain returning with his Mistress, who had not put on her Visard. Judge of the Financer's Surprise, and how he curs'd the Ball, the Captain, his Mistress and himself, for being such a Booby: He immediately discharged this treacherous Woman, and, being curious to know what complaisant Lady had so readily followed him, he soon came to understand that she was one of those kind Creatures who are always ready to oblige any Gentleman in Distress.

There's not a Ball but affords some odd Adventures, occasion'd by Love or Jealousy. These Days, or rather Nights of Pleasure, are always fatal to Husbands, Fathers and Mothers, however watchful they may be of their Wives and Daughters: The Liberties of the Ball, with the Advantages of the Disguise, defeat all their Vigilance.

This Sort of Assemblies very much resembles the ancient Pagan Customs in the Temples of *Cythera* and *Paphos*: I am at least positive, that the Goddess *Venus* has, at least, as many Votaries here, who perform their Vows to her.

Could'st thou imagine, my dear *Isaac*, that, in a Country where Love and Gallantry bear such a Sway, Money should be the prevailing Argument with the Fair Sex: There are few of them Proof against a handsome Compliment supported with a large Purse of Red-heads; and I'm very well assur'd that more Hearts are sold than given at *Paris*. The Women deny this Fact, and affect to despise



those who are influenced by the Motives of Interest, more than by Inclination; but often she who condemns her Neighbour or Friend, follows the very Maxim that she finds Fault with.

We are not sensible of our own Failings, Self-love conceals them; and we only judge of ourselves through the Veil of Passions that throw a Curtain over the Looking-glass in which our Mind ought to examine itself. 'I was thus *Philip* King of *Macedonia* formerly preach'd up a Morality to his Son quite different from what he practis'd himself: He blamed him for profusely throwing away his Money among the *Macedonians*, and reproached him with depending on Hearts that did not give, but sell themselves \*.

All Mankind endeavour to find Means to excuse their Weaknesses, and Philosophers themselves are even guilty of this Failing, which is, in a Manner, to cultivate the Vices. The Women, whose Vanity rises higher still than that of Men, are also more fertile in Excuses to varnish over Actions the least conform to Virtue. Would they excuse Infidelity to the Marriage-bed, they immediately fly to a certain seducing Propension to which Nature has subjected them, and is consequently irresistible. In their very Infancy, poor Creatures, they were join'd to a Man whom they could not love; and why should they be condemn'd to pass their gay Days in Sadness and Melancholy? If the Laws have made a Desire, the Work of Nature, criminal,

\* *Preclare in epistolâ quadum Alexandrum filium Philippus accusat, quod largitione benevolentiam Macedonum consecetur. Qua te malum, inquit, ratio in istam spem induxit, ut eos tibi fideles putares fore, quos pecunia corrupisses? An tu id ages, ut Macedones non te regem suum, sed ministrum & prabitorem putarent? Bene ministrum & prabitorem, quia sordidum Regi. Melius etiam quod largitionem corruptelam diiit esse. Fit enim deterior qui accipit, atque ad idem semper expectandum parior. "Hoc ille de filio: Sed praeceptum putemus omnibus." Cicero de Officiis, Lib. II.*

criminal, why did Men make such unreasonable Laws?

'Tis thus a false Woman finds Reasons to justify her Infidelity; and the Coquet too is not without her Excuse. "Is't a Crime (*says she*) to endeavour to please? If I am not really guilty, what Harm can the soft Things that are said, or Honours that are paid me, do to my Husband? Must I, forsooth, because I'm married, stop my Ears that I may not hear the Praises justly due to my Merit? And shall I, to humour a jealous-pated Husband, be obliged to shun the Company of those who treat me with the greatest Civility and Respect, and confine myself, like a She-Bear, to my Den? If he's such a Fool as to fill his Head, right or wrong, with Chimera's, to himself be the Blame; for my part, I'm not resolved to bury myself to cure him of his Crotchets."

'Tis thus the Coquet pleads for her Conduct, and why should she not, since the Female who even sells her Favours, has Arguments to justify it? Young, fair and lovely, why should she not make a proper Use of the Advantages that Heaven has bestow'd upon her? Years slip away, Beauty is on the Flight, old Age advances, and no Provision is made for the last dull Period of Life. When the Season of Love is once pass'd, it returns no more. A young Woman lovely, and on whom Fortune has not smil'd, ought never to forget the Fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant, and endeavour to fill her Coffers while Beauty lasts, or seek for Relief in vain.

*Que faisiez — vous autrefois ?  
Dit-on à cette Emprunteuse.  
Je chantois, ne vous déplaise,  
Nuit & Jour à tout venant.*

*Vous chantiez? J'en suis bien aise.  
Eh bien, guenez maintenant \*.*

Thus paraphras'd:

Say, Beggar, what thy ancient Trade?  
Let me the Question ask.  
To sing beneath some cooling Shade,  
Was Night and Day my Task.

I'm glad thy former Days were blest  
With Joy and chearful Song,  
But mumping now must be thy best;  
So, Madam, get along.

There's nothing, my dear *Isaac*, but what a Woman can palliate with specious Pretences: The more Wit she has, the more Shifts she finds to excuse her Faults. Let us therefore guard against this treacherous Sex, fly from their deceitful Charms, and look upon them as certain Draughts, delicious to the Taste, but poisonous in their Nature. I would not be here understood as if I thought it a Crime in a Philosopher to commence Lover, or that there are not Women who deserve to be esteem'd by the strictest of them all, but only that there's great Danger of being deceived in the Choice. The Heart is usually its own Counsellor, and follows blindly its own Bent, without calling Reason to its Assistance. A Glance of the Eye begets Love, which is not the Effect of Reflection: It feeds on a certain Sympathy, more than on the Perfections of the Object beloved; and often extinguishes, without our knowing how or wherefore, and when we least expected such a Change.

It has been often debated, whether a studious Man ought to marry, and many Reasons have been urged

\* *Fontaine's* first Fable turn'd into Verse by way of Parody,

ged for and against: But my Opinion is, that 'tis better for a Man, who intends to make Study the principal Business of his Life, to enjoy full Liberty, than to be under a certain Slavery which, how gentle soever it may be, must now and then lie heavy upon him. To be a Woman and not liable to Caprice, is a downright Impossibility, and what Schoolmen call a Contradiction *in terminis*: So that the Case is not, who is she that has none? but that she who has the least is the most reasonable and deserving. A Philosopher must be interrupted in his Meditations by the Charge of a Family: In a single State, let him be ever so poor, he can make a Shift; but the Case alters much in Matrimony. If he's rich, his Troubles still increase: The Advancement of his Family, the Settlement of his Children, the Maggots and Ambition of his Wife; all these Things, let him be ever so much Master of himself and of his Passions, must toss and torment him. So that I'm pretty certain *Socrates*, notwithstanding his philosophical Phlegm and Patience, wish'd his dear Half more than once at the Devil; and though he said nothing, believe me, such were his Thoughts. If it were the Custom in *France* to sell the Wives when they become tiresome, I know several learn'd Men that would dispose of theirs very cheap: And were this Privilege confin'd to the Studious, and Men of Letters, we should soon see all the lazy Fellows in the Kingdom poring upon Books.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; thou'rt happy in a Wife, who leaves thee undisturb'd in thy Closet, takes Charge of Family-cares, and sweetens thy leisure Hours with her agreeable Conversation: May ye be long mutually happy in one another.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*





## LETTER LXXXIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

WHEN I observe, my dear *Isaac*, in the Countries thro' which I travel, so many People happy, who are nevertheless so grossly ignorant that they may be almost rank'd in the Class of Brutes, it leads me to reflect on the Trouble and Pains that Men of Letters take to transmit their Names to Posterity. What Drudgery, what Vexations do not the most of them undergo? The Desire of piercing through the gloomy Night of Ages must be something very strong that the most valuable, nay the only Part of Life we enjoy should be sacrificed to it.

From the small Number of Years to which Nature has fix'd the Course of human Life, the first fifteen must be subtracted, because they are pass'd either in Infancy, or in the toilsome Work of Education. When we arrive at the thirteenth Lustrum, or sixtieth Year of our Age, we do nothing but languish; the Mind and Body begin to droop, and are equally expos'd to all sort of Infirmities: Consequently the Life of Man, taking it from the sixteenth Year of his Age to the sixtieth, must be reduced to forty five Years; and this Time, so short, so precious, is employ'd by the Learned in laborious, and often disagreeable Occupations, which afford them no other Satisfaction but the Hopes of transmitting their Memory to Posterity.

I con-

I confess, my dear *Isaac*, that the Sciences, when we can but strip them of the Difficulties with which they're surrounded, have something very satisfactory; and that a Geometrician or a Natural Philosopher, after twenty Years hard Labour and infinite Pains, thinks them all amply recompenc'd in the Discovery of some Truths till then unknown. But if they would carefully search into themselves, they must find that the Glory of perpetuating their Names, has been a stronger Motive than the Pleasure of clearing these new Truths from the Chaos where they lay buried. Were they certain of being the only Persons who knew them, and never allowed to divulge them, I doubt much if they would purchase the Knowledge at the Expence of hard Labour for many Years.

The Philosophers and the Learned are constantly talking of the Contempt of Glory, of Wisdom, and of the Tranquillity of Mind; but, notwithstanding their noble and pompous Speeches, 'tis certain that, without Glory and Vanity, Ignorance would triumph over Mankind. To what else but the Desire of being distinguish'd from the Vulgar, of surpassing others, and of raising their Admiration, does Antiquity owe its *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides* and *Demosthenes*? And is it not also to this that the Moderns are indebted for their illustrious Men, who have, in these latter Days, composed so many sublime and excellent Works.

If the learned Men had had nothing in View but to study the Moral Virtues, and to render themselves perfect in Wisdom, to know themselves would have been their whole Care, without attempting to measure the Heavens, to follow the Planets in their Courses, to examine and describe the Productions of Nature, or to weigh the Air.

" All these Things (*would they have said*) are useless to our Designs. What other End ought  
 " we

“ we to propose, but to render ourselves happy,  
 “ and to do Good to Mankind? Let us therefore  
 “ study every thing that may contribute to make  
 “ us virtuous, and communicate to our Fellow-  
 “ citizens and Friends our solid and useful Re-  
 “ flections. Of what Advantage would it be to  
 “ them to know that there’s no Vacuum, and that  
 “ the Earth turns round the Sun? Such Know-  
 “ ledge will neither make them more virtuous nor  
 “ more happy. Some poor illiterate Persons who  
 “ know nothing but what Nature, assisted with  
 “ some weak and general Instructions, has taught  
 “ them, are often happier than Men of Letters.  
 “ How many Tradesmen may we not find who,  
 “ peaceably employ’d at home in their several Pro-  
 “ fessions, live contentedly with their Families, and  
 “ with much more Satisfaction than the greatest  
 “ Philosophers surrounded in their Closets with  
 “ Books that declaim against Vanity and Glory?  
 “ ’Tis not therefore Knowledge, but Probity, that  
 “ brings Happiness. ’Tis a Folly to imagine, that  
 “ true Wisdom is wholly confin’d to Metaphysi-  
 “ cians or Rhetoricians, when the Cocker or the  
 “ Plowman often possess it in a higher Degree.  
 “ It must be sought where it is to be found; and  
 “ the harmless, quiet Ignorance of the Tradesman  
 “ is to be preferr’d to the unfruitful and useless  
 “ Knowledge of the Philosopher.”

’Tis certain, my dear *Isaac*, that if the People  
 who have been at so much Pains to communicate  
 to Mankind the Knowledge they have acquired,  
 had been influenced only by the Love of Wisdom,  
 they could not possibly have hinder’d themselves  
 from making these Reflections; and consequently  
 from being persuaded, that to teach the Art of Con-  
 tentment was infinitely more useful than to beat  
 their Brains about the Discovery of some Truths  
 of which the Knowledge was of no great Moment,  
 and

and the Acquisition attended with infinite Trouble. They would have told them freely : “ Make good  
 “ use of the present Time ; be virtuous, mind your  
 “ Business, and lose not Moments that are irre-  
 “ coverable. Time slides away : If your Heart be  
 “ not disturb’d by the Stings of Sin, and you make  
 “ the Laws of Probity the Rule of your Con-  
 “ duct, you have all that’s necessary to make one  
 “ happy. Application to barren and unprofitable  
 “ Studies would only serve to deprive you of the  
 “ present Good, in hopes of acquiring future and  
 “ imaginary Advantages : If you can but confine  
 “ yourself to the peaceable Enjoyment of the Fa-  
 “ vours which Heaven has bestowed upon you,  
 “ your Happiness is in your own Hands. How  
 “ dismal would the Fate of human Nature be,  
 “ should its Happiness depend on the Knowledge  
 “ of Things entirely foreign to it ? ”

This is, my dear *Isaac*, very remote from the Language of the Learn’d, and very different from their manner of instructing Men ; and no wonder it should be so : For did they talk at this Rate, they would be like the Sovereign Pontiffs, who should exclaim against the Belief of Indulgences, or, like Merchants, who should disparage their own Commodities. But this is so far from being the Case, that every Man of Letters, on the contrary, extols to the Skies the particular Study to which he applies himself, and would even establish its Glory on the Ruins of other Sciences. A Rhetorician is very sparing in his Praises of Philosophy : In his Opinion, the greatest Perfection of the human Mind consists in the Talent of persuading by the Strength of Eloquence, and of moving the Heart by the Loftiness of Stile. A Philosopher, on the contrary, looks upon a Rhetorician as a Differtator, or Critick, whose Discourses throw out a momentary Glare, but offer nothing that’s solid to those



those who want Reasons, not Words; nay further, he even joins with the Naturalist in absolutely condemning the Use and Study of Rhetorick, as a Thing pernicious to the publick Good. *They who masque and paint Women* (says a famous Sceptick Philosopher, speaking of the Rhetoricians) *do not so much Harm; for not to see them in their natural Colours, is but a small Loss: Whereas the others attempt not to deceive our Eyes, but our Judgment, and to adulterate and corrupt the Nature of Things. The Republicks that have maintain'd themselves in a regular Government, such as those of Crete and Macedonia, made no great Account of an Orator \**.

This Passion, so common among the Learned, of praising no Science but that to which they apply themselves; is it not an evident Proof that Vanity, Ambition, and a Thirst after Glory, have a greater Share in their Labours than a Desire of promoting Virtue? For if they studied only for the Benefit of Mankind, they would apply themselves either to Things absolutely useful, or, if they cultivated those that are more curious than profitable, they would equally praise all the Sciences, without giving the Preference to that in which they excel; but as they think that the Esteem in which they are already, will have an Influence upon that which they hope to acquire, Self-love always prevails. The Philosopher fancies, that the more his Philosophy is respected, the more he will be so himself. The Historian, the Poet, the Rhetorician, have the same Idea; and all contend who shall most emphatically praise History, Poetry and Rhetorick.

The Love of Wisdom, my dear *Isaac*, hunts not after vain Encomiums. A Man who thinks Life lost that is not employ'd in the Service of his Fellow-

low-

\* *Essays of Michael Montagne, Lib. I. Chap. XV. Pag. 607.*

low-citizens, makes no Difference with respect to Rank and the Esteem due to those who, by their Instructions, adorn the Mind, or improve the Heart. But the Vanity and Passion of shining, and of raising themselves above Competitors, are far from inspiring any such disinterested Sentiments: They excite Self-love, and produce a Jealousy, which, tho' secret, is not the less violent; and hence it is that the Learn'd render so little Justice to one another. They are under constant Fears lest the Reputation of Rivals should eclipse their own, and stop them in their Way to Immortality, at which they so furiously aim. I think, my dear *Isaac*, that I may be allow'd to make use of the Term *Fury*, since the Desire that Men of Letters have to perpetuate their Names far exceeds all moderate Bounds; and some of them have committed Actions as extraordinary, and, I may even say, as foolish and criminal, as *Erostratus*. Can there be a Death more extravagant than that of *Aristotle*, if what is said be true? And is it not a most insufferable Vanity to intimate to the World that we will cease to live, because we cannot unfold a Secret o. Nature? That other Philosopher, who threw himself into one of the Gulfs of *Mount Aetna*, and left his Slippers on the Brink of the Precipice, that the World might know what Death he had made Choice of, ought he not to be look'd upon as a Victim to the Fury of immortalizing his Name.

The Moderns have been as anxious for the Glory of being transmitted to Posterity, as the Ancients. *Vanini* chose rather to be burnt alive than to make a publick Recantation of his abominable System: He thought that his Followers would less esteem his Works, did he not maintain the impious Parts of them even unto Death. A very particular Instance is reported of him, which clearly demonstrates the extravagant Vanity of a Virtuoso, to say  
nothing

nothing that may lessen the Reputation of his Writings. When they were tying him upon the Wood-Pile, reflecting on the Torments that he was going to suffer, he cried out, *O God! to what Punishment am I reserv'd?* A Priest, who had accompanied him to the Place of Execution, in order to persuade him to acknowledge the Existence of the Deity, laid hold of *Vanini's* Exclamation. *There is then a God,* (said he) *since you call upon him. 'Tis only a way of Speaking,* (answer'd the Atheist) *which signifies nothing.* These were his last Words; the Flames of the Pile, that Moment set on fire, prevented his uttering any more Blasphemies\*.

Some learned Men, though they have not been so much led away by Vanity as these just now mention'd, yet they have done Things directly contrary to their Peace and Tranquillity, in hopes that they would render their Names immortal. How many have suffer'd Banishment, Prisons, and the Confiscation of their Estates, who might have avoided all those Evils, by suppressing their Works, or by disowning them? They chose rather to lose all they had, and to undergo a rigorous Captivity, or Banishment from their native Country, than to have their Memory extinguish'd.

The *Grecian* Bishop, who consented to be deprived of his Bishoprick rather than to acknowledge himself

\* This Fact seems to contradict *Moreri's* Account, who assures, that *Vanini's* Tongue was cut out: How then could he speak when they tied him on the Pile? To reconcile these different Reports, we must suppose, that *Vanini* spoke some before his Tongue was cut out; and that the Moment this was done, the Pile was set on fire. *Aaron Monceca*, to whom I wrote at *Constantinople*, to have this Matter explain'd, answer'd, That he had read the Fact, which he had advanced, in a very good Author, whose Name he could not remember; but added, that these were the original Words of the Conversation: *Ah Deus! Ergo est Deus, dixit Presbiter. Modus est loquendi, respondit Vaninius.* I was inclinable to suppress this Fact; but after *Aaron Monceca's* Answer, I thought myself obliged to translate it such as it was.

himself not to have been the Author of *Theagenes* and *Chariclea* a Romance, has had many Imitators in these latter Ages. *Arnaud, Quenel, Saint-Ciran*, and many other Writers, might have enjoy'd a quiet and peaceable Life, had they not concern'd themselves in the Affairs of the Times: And the *Ancho-rets* of *Port-Royal*, had they wrote no more than the *Mathurin* Monks, or had they only publish'd Books as bad as those compos'd by *Capuchin* Friars, their Retreat would have subsisted to this very Day. The Desire of immortalizing their Fame, and the Jealousy or Hatred which they had conceived against the Jesuites, have occasion'd their Ruin.

How fatal soever an immoderate Desire of Glory may be to the greatest Part of learn'd Men, we ought at least, my dear *Isaac*, to excuse it in them, upon account of the Profit which we draw from their Folly: Their mutual Emulation excites them to outdo one another in composing a thousand excellent Works; let us therefore pity their Ambition, the *Primum Mobile* of their Productions, and acknowledge nevertheless that we lie under Obligations to the very Crime that we condemn. It supplies the want of Virtue, and, without it, the Sciences would languish.

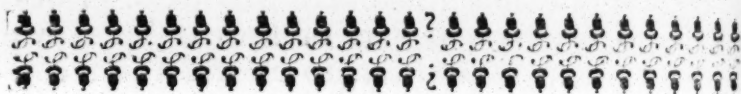
If there be any Faults pardonable, to be sure it must be those that discharge the Office of Wisdom so exactly, that, without long Contemplation, there's no Discovery to be made of their Imperfection: Besides, all the learned Men cannot be said to carry their Desires for Glory and Renown to Extremes. In all the different States, in all the different Professions, there are many Persons who stretch Things to the highest Pitch; and among Men of Letters such are likewise to be found: But there are also who curb their Desires, and keep them within certain Bounds. So, if it be



true that all Men are desirous of Immortality, 'tis also true that they don't, all, employ the same Means of arriving at it, nor purchase it at the same Price.

Let us, my dear Friend, despise those who write rather to gratify their own Vanity in a distant Prospect of Praise, when they're dead and gone, than from a Motive of being useful to their Fellow-creatures: If ever we put Pen to Paper, let this, this alone, be the Mark at which we aim, and look upon every other Motive as vain and foolish. *Adieu.*

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER LXXXV.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

THE *Nazarenes*, my dear *Brito*, are the first who turn their Friars and their superstitious Ceremonies into Ridicule. Some brisk and bold Genius's start up now and then, who, shaking off the Chains of Slavery, present Reason to publick View in a glorious Light: But the Monks soon find Means to darken it, and none but Philosophers reap the Benefit, so as to fortify their Minds against the Efforts of Superstition. I have lately read a Book, (written by a *Nazarene*) intitled, *History of the incomparable Don Inigo de Guipuscoa, the Flower of Knights, and Founder of the Inighistian Monarchy; with a short Description of the Establishment and Government of that formidable Empire.* By *Hercules*

*Hercules Rafiel de Selva, Gentleman* \*: Which is a lively and engaging Description of the surprising and extraordinary Actions of one of the most illustrious Hero's of Monachism, nay, even of *Nazarenism*.

This Man was a *Spaniard*, and called *Inigo*, of the same Character with most of his Countrymen, that's to say, vain, proud, ignorant, an obsequious Lover, always ready to undertake the most extraordinary Things, and even to lose his Life for the Fair Sex. 'Tis thus the Author of this Work describes him, before he was seiz'd with a Fit of Religion which quite turn'd his Brain: But I shall here put down his own very Words. *Glory and Love were his predominant Passions: He did not conceive how a Man of Birth and Honour could live without Ambition, or be happy without Gallantry: During the Campaign he gave himself wholly up to Glory, and brav'd Death and Dangers to acquire it; but when the Army was retir'd to Winter-quarters, he threw himself into Venus' Arms, and forgot the God of War.*

This is the Picture which our Author draws of his Knight-Errant; for such he constantly calls *Don Inigo de Guipuscoa*, and often compares him to *Don Quixote*. Thou'lt perhaps not be displeased to know how this odd Comparison came to be made: He begins with telling us, that Reading was the Source of all the Extravagancies of both the Knight-Errants. The *Amadis's* turn'd *Don Quixote's* Head, and the religious Romances had the same Effect upon *Don Inigo*; having been wounded at a Siege, and wearied with being so long confin'd to his Bed, a Book, says the Writer of his *Pious Follies*, intitled, *The Flower of Saints*, in the *Castilian* Language, was brought to him.

" This sacred Romance, full of marvellous Sto-  
 U 2 " ries,

\* This Book was printed at the Hague by the Widow Levier, in two Volumes Octavo.

"ries, had almost at first as great Influence upon  
 "him, and afterwards much more, than the Books  
 "of Chivalry, which till then were his sole De-  
 "light: He admired, in the Wandering Saints,  
 "that Resignation which embolden'd them to tra-  
 "vel all the World over without any Provision."  
 This, my dear *Brito*, is *Don Quixote* all over; his  
 very Terms, Phrases, Expressions, Ideas and Sen-  
 timents.

The Method by which our Author determines  
 his Hero to go in quest of Adventures, is very  
 arch; and in one single Passage he ridicules all  
 those who have their Brains over-heated with a  
 superstitious Devotion, and whose ridiculous Ac-  
 tions were look'd upon as Miracles by the meaner  
 Sort of *Nazarenes*, and preach'd up, as Examples  
 of the most sublime Sanctity, by a Crowd of fan-  
 tastical Monks. "Wherefore (*said the Knight-*  
 "Errant, *Don Inigo, to himself*) may not I, who  
 "am of such a robust Constitution, perform what  
 "so many Saints of delicate, tender Complexions  
 "have done, and feed with Saint *Hilarion* on four  
 "Figs a Day; or, as Saint *Apollonius*, only live  
 "upon raw Herbs, such as the Ground unculti-  
 "vated produces, and which the Beasts browse:  
 "Sleep upright on a Stone, as Saint *Pacome*; or  
 "sit in the Trunk of a Tree, surrounded with  
 "pointed Stakes, as Saint *Zuirard*; or even not  
 "to go Bed at all, as Saint *Dorothy the Theban*?  
 "Why may not I make two hundred Genuflexi-  
 "ons every Day, as Saint *Guingalis*; pray three  
 "hundred Times, as Saint *Paul the Hermit*; and,  
 "in Imitation of Saint *Policronius*, load my  
 "Shoulders, when I pray, with the Root of a  
 "big Oak? What! shall I, who have suffer'd so  
 "much Torment that my *Spanish* Leather Bus-  
 "kin might clap close to my Thighs, refuse to  
 "suffer lesser Evils to become a great Saint? If

" a Saint *Daniel* has had the Courage to imitate  
 " the admirable Saint *Simeon Stilites*, who stood  
 " Night and Day erect upon a Pillar forty Cubits  
 " high, what should hinder me to do the same  
 " Thing, or, at least, to remain bended in a Cage  
 " placed on the sharp Top of a Rock, or hung in  
 " the Air, as practised by Saint *Baradat* and Saint  
 " *Thalelle*? What should hinder me to quench  
 " the Flame of Concupiscence by throwing my-  
 " self naked in the Middle of a Swarm of Flies,  
 " as Saint *Macarius* of *Alexandria*; or, in a Heap  
 " of Brambles and Thorns, as Saint *Benedict*; or,  
 " in Water in the Middle of Winter, as Saint *Ad-  
 helme* and Saint *Ulfric*; or, amongst Ice and  
 " Snow, as the Seraphick Saint *Francis*? In fine,  
 " what should hinder me to give myself daily a  
 " thousand hearty Lashes, after the Example of  
 " Saint *Anthelme*? and even to imitate the great  
 " Saint *Dominick*, who gave himself three hundred  
 " thousand Lashes every Week, while he was re-  
 " peating twenty Psalters? Was their Flesh of a  
 " different Nature from mine, or shall I yield to  
 " them in Zeal and Courage?"

'Tis from the Actions of these pious, brain-sick  
 Wanderers that our Author determines *Don Inigo*  
 to abandon his former Trade and commence Spi-  
 ritual Knight-Errant; and the Motives that induce  
 him yield nothing, in Ridiculousness, to those that  
 determined *Don Quixote*. Is there any thing, in  
 effect, so extravagant as to imagine that the Deity  
 takes a Pleasure to see the nasty Back-sides of some  
 Monks soundly whipp'd, and to be delighted with  
 the Extravagancies of two or three *Hermites* caper-  
 ing as *Amadis* upon the Rock, or as *Don Quixote*  
 upon the Black Mountain? What Stupidity, my  
 dear *Jacob*! the more I reflect upon Men in gen-  
 eral, the more I find them foolish and to be pitied.  
 There's no Extravagance but what they can adapt



to the Notion which they form'd to themselves of the Divinity: They smother the natural Light bestow'd upon them, by a thousand Chimera's, and, by their Follies, render the Supreme Being, whom they adore, as despicable as the Pagans by their ridiculous Multiplication.

I don't think it more absurd to believe that a Bit of Stick or a Stone has a Spark of the Divine Essence, than to imagine that half a Dozen Strokes of Discipline can intitle us to the Protection of an Almighty, Eternal and Supreme Being, or to fancy that there's any Relation betwixt Heaven and a Capuchin's Buttocks. *But* (say certain Nazarenes) *these Whippings and Austerities cool lascivious Desires.* How! to resist Crimes must the Nazarenes have Recourse to Extravagancies? and to divert their Minds from Evil, must they be benumb'd? 'Tis a Pity they should be so wicked that, without becoming meer Fools, they can't be virtuous and good. The Philosophers, and even those whose Systems were most contrary to the Deity, had no occasion for such Extravagancies to keep them right in their Morals; Virtue had Charms in itself sufficient to attract their Attention and Respect. *Epicurus*, though the Head of a Sect opposite to that of the *Stoicks*, yet forc'd these Philosophers to do Justice to his Merit, and to acknowledge that his Voluptuousness was very moderate and sober \*. The most illustrious *Nazarene* Doctors have confess'd that they were charm'd with the Modesty and Temperance of *Epicurus* †; and yet this Philosopher

\* *Nec estimatur voluptas illa Epicuri: Ita enim me hercule sentio, cum sobria & sicca sit.* Seneca de vita beata. Cap. XIII.

† *Epicurum accepturum fuisse palmam in animo meo, nisi ego credidissem post mortem restare animæ vitam & fructus meritorum, quod Epicurus credere noluit.* Augustinus Confess. Lib. II, Cap. XVI.

osopher never flead his Back-side, nor fancied that to rub it with Thorns was the way to become virtuous.

The Ridiculousness of the Passage which I have just now quoted, is still augmented by its Resemblance with that which we read in *Michael de Cervantes*, and which first determin'd *Don Quixote* to set out upon his Knight-Errantry; but I shall here transcribe it, that thou may'st judge whether the Worldly or Spiritual Knight was the most extravagant.

" *Don Quixote* acknowledg'd that *Cid-Ruy-Dias* was a brave Knight, but not to be compar'd with the *Knight of the Burning Sword*, who, with a single back Stroke, cut in sunder two monstrous Giants. *Bernardo del Carpio* was in favour with him, because in the Plain of *Roncevalles* he got the better of the enchanted *Orlando*, choaking him as *Hercules* did *Anteus*, that gigantick Son of the Earth. He always spoke well of the Giant *Morgan*, who, though of that monstrous Brood remarkable for their Pride and Brutality, was nevertheless civil and affable. But of all Men he most admired *Rinaldo of Montalban*, particularly when he sallied out to rob all he met, and when in *Barbary* he stole *Mahomet's* Idol of massy Gold, as the Story goes \*."

Thou see'st, my dear *Jacob*, that the Parallel between the Hero of *Guipuscoa* and *La Mancha* is just, and that both of them were induced to commence Knight-Errants by Reasons equally extravagant; yet it must be allow'd that afterwards *Don Inigo* much exceeded *Don Quixote*, and, notwithstanding his Follies, founded a powerful and formidable Society: For thou must know that *Don Inigo de Guipuscoa* is none other but the famous *Ignatius of Loyola*, and the *Inghistian* Monarchy that

\* *Don Quixote*, Lib. I. Pag. 12

that of the Jesuites, which is become so formidable to the whole Universe. The Author gives a very curious History of its sudden and extraordinary Establishment in all Parts of the World, in less than sixty or eighty Years, in spite of the strongest Opposition from the most powerful and illustrious Societies. Without flying into Invectives, he artfully describes People who are the Subject of general Conversation, though but a very few know them; and if he does them Justice with respect to their good Qualities, he no ways flatters them in their Failings, or what they do amiss, observing all along to advance nothing but what the Jesuites themselves have said: But, by the Manner and Turn given to what he borrows from them, he plainly exposes the *Pious Follies* of their Hero, which they affirm'd to be *Miracles*; and is particularly mindful of those perform'd at his Beatification, which did as much expose them to the Indignation as to the Sneers of the Publick. He artfully lays open their secret Views, and the most hidden Springs of their Politicks; discovering, at the same time, in the clearest Manner, the Inconveniences of their Morality. In one Word, 'tis a faithful Picture of their Maxims and Conduct; and, excepting the famous *Provincial Letters*, I have read nothing so good, nor so well writ upon the Subject.

This Book being as yet only handed about very privately, 'twas by the Chevalier *de Maisin's* Means that it came into my Hands. I know not what the Reverend Fathers will say when it comes to be more publick; but I'm pretty well assur'd that they won't pretend its Descent from Heaven, as they did with respect to a certain Book publish'd by their *Inigo*, at a Time when he was so ignorant, that some Years after, being a Student at the College of Saint *Barbe*, he had like to have been whipp'd at the Age of thirty three, which oblig'd his Disciples

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ciples to alledge, that *God had sent down from Heaven to Inigo, by the Angel Gabriel, this mystical Book, intituled, Spiritual Exercises* \*. Though this Idea is borrowed from the *Turks*, and that *Mahomet* pretended the *Alcoran* had been given to him in the same Manner, the *Jesuites* have made no Difficulty to adopt it, as being most proper for their Designs: They have thought there was no great Harm in causing the Archangel *Gabriel* to take one Trip more to the Earth. But what's most disagreeable for this cœlestial Messenger is, that they metamorphose him into a Hawker of very wretched Performances; and, since this is the Case, I'm very much surpriz'd that they have not made him trot about with the *Life of Mary Alacoque*, and the *Truth of the Abbot Paris's Miracles made evident*, which yield to none of the Kind.

Take care of thyself, my dear *Brito*; live content and happy, and let us make ourselves merry with the Follies of our Persecutors.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\*.*

\* Refert Ludovicus de ponte, vir omni exceptione major, in vita P. Baltasaris Alvarez, Cap. XLIII. Deum hac exercitia sancto patri nostro revelasse, imo per Gabrielem Archangelum non nemini fuisse a deipara virgine significatum, se patronam eorum, fondatricem, atque adiutricem fuisse, docuisseque Ignatium ut ea sic conciperet, Sotwel, Bibliothecæ Societ. Jesu. Pag. 1.



LETTER





## L E T T E R LXXXVI.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

**I**N my last Letter I promis'd to say something about the Physicians of *Montpellier*, whose Reputation flies all over *Europe*. I had several Opportunities of conversing with some of the most eminent, and am still of the same Sentiments that I had at *Constantinople*, which seem'd not to agree with thy Opinion.

Physick is of all Arts the most uncertain. If those who make it their Study did not apply themselves to Anatomy, and some other Things that come within the Compass of Chirurgery, I do affirm that a Man may become a Physician, and know all the mighty Springs of that dangerous Art, in three Days. 'Tis true, that long Experience, and the frequent visiting of Persons under different Distempers, may give some Ideas of certain Symptoms, from which the Physician may form Conjectures; but 'tis after he has kill'd a great many, that he may perhaps cure some, and therefore he is no otherwise to be look'd upon than as a Man who has but just taken the Doctor's Cap: And if we consider him thus, three Days Study, in my Opinion, are sufficient to instruct him in the principal Secrets of his Profession.

There

There are only six medicinal Remedies; all the different Names ascrib'd to them signify nothing but their different Compositions, or their Preparation more or less strong: So that here, my dear *Monceca*, follows all that's necessary in the medicinal Way, and the whole of Physick, viz. *Mercury*, for the venereal Distempers; *Sulphur*, for external Ailments that go only Skin-deep; *Hypocacuanana*, for Dysenteries; *Emetick Wine*, for the Diseases that call for a strong Evacuation; the *Quinquina* or *Bark*, for Agues; *Rhubarb*, *Sena* and *Cassia*, for gentle Purgations. Bleeding is as much, if not more, the Business of a Chirurgeon as of a Physician. The whole Faculty, in all Parts of the World, found their Science upon the Knowledge of these Remedies: They now and then invent some Drugs and new Compositions, but are still oblig'd to return to the first Principles, known and practis'd by the meanest Country Apothecaries, who perform as many Cures as the Physicians of *Montpellier*, and kill perhaps a great many less. But one Thing is certain, that, proportionably, more die in Towns than in Villages; and that there's not a City in *Europe* where we see fewer old Men than at *Montpellier*.

It is not, however, my Intention to attack the Reputation which the learned Physicians of this City have justly acquir'd: I look upon them as good Natural Philosophers and Anatomists; by which Means skillful Persons are form'd for the Stone and Gravel, and, in short, for all the Distempers in which the Hand can be of any Use towards the Cure. In working upon known Subjects the Physicians of this Country have an infinite Advantage over others: But are they to undertake the Cure of internal Distempers, whose Sources lie hid; such as, Fevers, Dysenteries, Head-aches, &c.? They're no better than meer Country Apothecaries.

ries. The Prescription is, *Mercury, Hypocacuana, Bleeding*; and if the Distemper proves obdurate, more *Mercury, Hypocacuana* and *Bleeding*: *Seignare, purgare, clisterisare*; & *si maladia opiniatria non vult se guarire, resignanre, repurgare, reclisterisare*\*. Let the Sticklers for Physick be ever so much offended at such Jokes, yet 'tis certain that the whole of it is reducible to these Remedies known to every Mortal: So that if a Physician of *Montpellier* be allow'd any small Advantage over a Country Apothecary, it must be in Cases wherein immediate Remedies may be applied, and that he can lay his Hand upon the Sore; in that Shape, the Knowledge of Physick and Anatomy render the Cure almost certain.

I have a strong Inclination to think of the medicinal Knowledge, as Philosophers do of *Matter, upon which Matter alone can act*. Accordingly Philosophers must not flatter themselves to perform any Cure upon the Parts of the human Body, but when they can make *immediate* Applications to these very Parts. The Moment they're reduced to call for foreign Assistance, I mean various Medicines, the meanest little Apothecaries are their Equals. I have discours'd with several learn'd Physicians as freely as I now write to thee; and though they did not absolutely agree to what I said, alledging, that Experience made amends for their Ignorance of what pass'd in the human Body, yet they confess'd, that such Experience was far from being easily acquir'd; and that the first Patients upon whom they tried Experiments, had a very fair Chance of being quickly dispatch'd into the other World. 'Tis the general Opinion, thou know'st, that the Gentlemen of the Faculty think they have a Right to try all sort of Experiments upon the Poor and Miserable, that the Rich may reap the Benefit

\* *Moliere, in his Malade Imaginaire.*

Benefit of their Discoveries. The Story of the learn'd Man lying sick in a Hospital confirms this Opinion; he heard three Physicians debating in *Latin*, if they should make a Trial of a Remedy upon him which might kill him: One of the Doctors urged, that there was no Caution to be observ'd with a despicable, mean Soul. How happy was it for the sick Man that he understood their Discourse, and could reproach them in the same Language, which he did very pathetically \*; and by that Means sav'd his Life: For the Doctors gave over Thoughts of trying new Experiments, and treated him so well and carefully that he soon recover'd his Health. May the God of our Fathers, my dear *Monceca*, prevent our falling into the Hands of such People, and preserve our Health, the most precious Thing on Earth!

A Custom prevails in this Country, which I think very useful to keep the Body healthy and active. The Youth are brought up in the Use of several Exercises, which facilitate the Circulation of the Blood by Transpiration; and it appears to me that the Inhabitants in general love Diversions that require Agility and Strength of Body. On certain Days of the Year Prizes are bestow'd on those who distinguish themselves in the publick Exercises, in Imitation of the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*. Two or three Days ago I was present at one of those Entertainments, and saw several young Men a wrestling; the Conqueror receiv'd, from the Hands of the chief Magistrate, by way of Prize, a Silk Scarf with a Silver Lace: And the Prize of Races is a Piece of Plate curiously

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chased.

\* *Faciamus experimentum in anima vili. Responso. Appellas animam vilem, pro qua Christus passus est mori.* This Passage is thus reported; but *Jacob Brito* had wrote it otherwise, to avoid the naming of Jesus Christ, of whom the *Jews*, harden'd in their Blindness, don't much care to speak.



chafed. I was delighted to see in these Diversions an Emblem of the ancient Games of Greece, and could not but very much approve of Customs which encouraged the Citizens to form themselves to Fatigue, and to preserve and augment their Strength, by the Means of Prizes of which the Distribution is so useful to the Good of the State.

If we examine, my dear *Monceca*, the Origin of the Games and Diversions of ancient Greece, we shall easily perceive that Politicks had at least as great a Share as the Spirit of Religion, or the Love of Shews. *They had a mind (says a French Author \*) to reassemble in the same Place, and to reunite, by common Sacrifices, different independent People, more remote by the Diversity of Interests, than by the Distance of Places.*

Those Shews, to which all Greece flock'd, cemented Hearts, smother'd Differences, and drowned Hatred and Division in the Pleasures they afforded, and, without raising Jealousies, entertain'd a noble Emulation; so that they were a sort of School, where the Body was, betimes, inur'd to the military Fatigues. Races, Wrestling, and the Combat of the Cestus, were lively Images of the military Exercises; and every Grecian, during the Peace, learn'd the Art of War.

The French formerly had Diversions not much inferior in Magnificence to the ancient *Olympick Games*: Their Jufts, at which the Kings and Princes often assisted, were delightful and magnificent Sights. The Nobility, passionately fond of Glory, began their Exercises very early, in order to distinguish themselves in these famous Turnaments, in which the Conqueror often received the Reward from the Hands of his Sovereign. But the fatal Accident that happen'd to *Henry II.* who was kill'd by a Splinter of a Lance darted into his Eye, brought

WOLF

those

\* Works of *Jourel*, Tom. II. Pref. Hist. Pag. 17.

those Turnaments into Discredit, and in a short Time thereafter the Use of them was quite abolish'd. The same Policy that prohibited Duels, by which the Kingdom was depriv'd of its bravest Inhabitants, has also contributed to the Abolishment of them. 'Twas resolv'd to remove every thing that had the Air of a private Combat, in order to bring the *French* more easily into the Custom of employing their Valour only in the Service of their King and Country.

The continual Wars in which *France* has been engag'd, is the Reason why they have not perceiv'd how necessary it is, in Time of Peace, to train up the Nobility in the Use of Exercises, that might render Arms familiar to them. 'Tis true, they have supplied the want of Turnaments by several useful Establishments. The *Academies*, the Companies of *Mausquetaires*, and the *Body-guards*, are Schools to form the young Nobility; but me-thinks they're not duly encourag'd by honorary Rewards. In such a well govern'd State as *France*, there ought to be every Year a certain Number of Prizes appropriated to the military Exercises, as in the Case of the Sciences. I would have one properly belonging to the Engineers, and that something should be bestow'd upon every Regiment: The Officer who is most expert in the Motions and Evolutions, the Engineer best skill'd in the Business of Fortification, should receive the Recompence of their Merit publickly at the Head of their different Corps; were it only but an *Olive* Crown, as a Badge of Honour and Glory, what would not they do to deserve it? A red or blue Ribbon is not a Thing very essential, and yet what won't Men undertake to obtain it? These sort of Recompences animate and keep them in continual Exercise, prompt them to Virtue, awaken in every Heart the Love of Glory, and cost nothing to the State.

How happy would it be for the People, were the Sovereigns only to reward those whose Merit rais'd them above others! What suppress'd Pensions would come into their Treasuries! In how many different Shapes might they not ease their People, and diminish the Taxes! How many Women, Gown-men and Courtiers, would learn to retrench their extravagant Expences, which the Widow, Orphan, and wretched Peasant, are often obliged to pay.

The Ministry of *France*, wise and prudent, has endeavour'd to rectify the Abuses in Pensions. Formerly by the Means of Friends about the Sovereigns, every thing was obtain'd, but now the Case is alter'd; Interest without Merit won't do. I often hear some *Frenchmen* exclaiming against this commendable Circumspection of the Ministry: But they who reason solidly, and judge without Passion, extol a Prudence which tends to the Good of the State, and to ease the People, already but too much oppress'd by the Misery of the Times.

Whatever prudent Conduct, whatever Care, is taken in the Management of publick Affairs, 'tis impossible to force a general Approbation. The Caprice of Men is so great, and they think so differently, that it would be Madness to attempt the pleasing of them all; and therefore what Reason dictates is exactly to be follow'd: When she has once pronounc'd, nothing remains but to despise vain and ridiculous Censures.

Farewel, my dear *Monceca*; when I arrive in *Spain* thou shalt hear from me.

*Montpellier*, \*\*\*\*\*



LETTER



## LETTER LXXXVII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I COMMUNICATED thy last Letter to some Natural Philosophers of my Acquaintance, who are almost of thy Opinion about the Uncertainty of that Part of the medicinal Art which may be call'd an *occult Science*, and of which the Knowledge is founded upon some very deceitful Experiments. The learn'd Gentlemen of whom I speak are abundantly qualified to judge of the Merit of its different Parts, having studied and examin'd, with the greatest Care, all the Intricacies of that Science, which they divide into two Parts; the one, uncertain, full of Doubts and Questions not to be resolv'd; the other agreeable, and always illuminated by the shining Light of Truth. Under this last is comprehended Experimental Philosophy; the other rolls upon the general Principles of that Science, and upon the first Operators of Nature, if the little Atoms, which, by their Conjunction, make up all the different Beings in the Universe, may be thus term'd.

This Branch of Physicks, or Natural Philosophy, may be reduc'd to two single Points, which contain all the rest, and necessarily carry along with them their Examination and Discussion, *viz. the Void and the Infinite*. Whoever could explain these two Questions, would render the first Part of Natural Philosophy as clear and certain as the second: But I fancy that, as long as there are Men,



the different Opinions for and against *Infinity* will be disputed, as well as those that maintain or condemn *the Void*. Two thousand Years hence People will be as much in the Dark about this Matter as they are now, and future Disputes will as little clear it up as the pass'd. The Mind of Man being limited, cannot reach to certain Things above its Sphere; to what Purpose then are endless Disputes that signify nothing?

'Tis my Opinion that we should apply to the Study of certain Sciences as we do to the reading of Romances, take them by way of Amusement, and only look upon them as agreeable Dreams: By this Means we should abridge many useless Difficulties, which only fix the Mind upon Subjects that are of no Use to it, and which it cannot reasonably hope to comprehend. Of this Kind are the Questions that treat of *Infinity*: For our finite Understanding loses itself in Infinity, which produces a Chaos of Ideas contrary to one another, and keeps the Mind in such Doubt and Confusion, that it can never determine itself with any Certainty of Truth.

The ancient Philosophers have disputed much about *Infinity*, and have advanced probable Arguments on both Sides. But this Question is so full of Intricacies, that when the Understanding attempts to dive into it, Objections which it forms to itself are still in the Way, and stop its Career; so that to study such Matters is nothing but learning how to be a *Sceptick* \*. To be convinced of the Truth of my Opinion, let us but examine the various Systems of the Philosophers, which, however different to Appearance, may be reduced to two; among the Ancients, to those of the *Epicureans*;

\* See a Book called *La Philosophie de bon Sens*; or, *Philosophical Reflections on the Uncertainty of human Knowledge*. The Design of it is to shew how little Certainty there is in most Sciences.

*reans*; and among the Moderns, to those of the *Gassendists* and the *Cartesians*: And upon certain Questions the Sentiments of these four Sects may be reduced to two particular Opinions; one, that admits of *void*, limits Matter, and sets Bounds to its Divisibility; the other holds, that all is *full*, admits of Matter's being infinite or indefinite, and infinitely divisible. In examining these Questions we run over that Part of Physicks which I believe we shall never be able to comprehend.

If we listen to an *Epicurean*, or a *Gassendist*, he'll tell us that a Vacuum is absolutely necessary, and that without it there can be no Motion. "If all be full (*says he*) how can Bodies act and change their Places? It would imply a Contradiction to pretend that they can penetrate through one another, that one may possess the other's Place. This last must necessarily yield. But how should it yield, if it be stopp'd by another, this other by a third, and so on to the World's End, all being full, and out of the Power of any thing to yield \*. 'Tis in vain (*pursues the Gassendist*) to object, that the soft and light Bodies yield to  
" the

\* ——— *Locus est intactus, inane vacansque.*

*Quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri*

*Res possent; namque officium quod corporum exstat,*

*Officere, atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset*

*Omnibus: Haud igitur quidquam procedere possêt*

*Principium, quoniam cedendi nulla daret res.*

Lucret. de Rerum Nat. Lib. I.

Thus translated by Mr. Creech:

A Void is Space intangible: Thus prov'd.  
For were there none, no Body could be mov'd;  
Because where e'er the brisker Motion goes,  
It still must meet with Stops, still meet with Foes:  
'Tis natural to Bodies to oppose.  
So that to move would be in vain to try,  
But all would fix'd, stubborn and moveless lie;  
Because no yielding Body could be found,  
Which first should move, and give the other Ground,

" the hard and heavy, and that the Motion of  
 " Bodies is made like that of Fish in Water: For  
 " a Fish has no Power of moving in its Element,  
 " but by the Means of void; and Particles of  
 " Water could not possibly give way, were there  
 " not little empty Spaces into which the Fish, by  
 " its Motion, drives them. Were every Place  
 " full, the soft Bodies could no more yield than  
 " the hard ones do. Without some void there  
 " would be none soft, they being so by reason of  
 " the empty Spaces that are contain'd within them:  
 " For Instance, let us squeeze any soft Matter, it be-  
 " comes hard by the Conjunction of Parts, so as  
 " to resist any Impression; which would be the  
 " Case with every body, were all full and conti-  
 " guous \*."

Though

\* *Cedere squammigeris latices nitentibus aiunt,  
 Et liquidas aperire vias: Quia post loca pisces  
 Linqunt, quo possint cedentes confluere undae:  
 Sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri,  
 Et mutare locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.  
 Scilicet id falsa totum ratione receptu'st.  
 Nam quo squammigeri poterunt procedere tandem,  
 Ni spatium dederint latices? Concedere porro,  
 Quo poterunt undae, cum pisces ire nequibunt?  
 Aut igitur motu privandu'st? Corpora quaque  
 Aut esse admistum dicendu'st rebus inane.*

Lucret. de Rerum Nat. Lib. I.

Thus translated by Mr. Creech:

But some object, the Floods give Fishes Way,  
 Who cut their Passage through the yielding Sea;  
 Because they leave a Space where e'er they go,  
 To which the yielding Waters circling flow:  
 And hence, by an Analogy, they prove,  
 That though the World was full, yet Things may move.  
 But this is weak; —————  
 For how could Fishes ply their natural Oars,  
 Unless the Waves gave way? how these divide,  
 Except the Fish first part the yielding Tide?  
 Well then, fight Sense, deny what that will prove,  
 Discard all Motion, and the Power to shove;  
 Or grant a Void, whence Things begin to move.

Though this seems to be solid Reasoning, yet when the *Peripatetick* and *Cartesian* ask how it is possible to maintain the Existence of a Being which is a pure Nothing, the Mind's at once stopp'd short by this first Difficulty, and, by diving into it, soon forgets the Arguments for a Vacuum or Void: It can by no means admit a negative Idea, a Nothing, to be a real Being; and therefore remains in a perpetual Uncertainty\*.

Let us leave this Question, and consider the *Infinity of Matter*. *There must be empty Space beyond the Universe*, says a *Gassendist*, and gives two essential Reasons for his Assertion. "Suppose" (*says he*) you were at the Extremity of the Universe, and that you tried to extend your Arm, "either it will be stopp'd, or not; if the former, something exists without the Bounds of the Universe that stopp'd it; and if you have Liberty to extend it, there must be a Space without the Universe: Consequently you must allow of a void Space beyond the World, or maintain that *Matter is infinite*, which is not only absurd, but impious; for there cannot be two *Infinities*. What's *infinite* comprehends every thing, and must be GOD: So that to make *Matter infinite*, is an abominable Opinion. As for the Evasion which the *Cartesians* have borrowed of *Chrysippus*, and their ambiguous Word *Indefinite*, 'tis childish, trifling, unworthy of the Candour and Sincerity of a Philosopher: A *Norman* may as

" well

\* Propositio III.

*Repugnat, ut detur vacuum.*

Demonstratio.

*Per vacuum intelligitur extensio sine substantia corporea; — corpus sine corpore, quod est absurdum. i. e.* It is a Contradiction to assert a Vacuum or Void; for by it is understood Extension without the Substance of a Body, that is, a Body without a Body, which is absurd. *Renati Cartesij Princ. Phil. More Geometrico demonstrata per Benedictum de Spinoza. Part II. Pag. 48.*



" well tell me, if I ask him what Money he has  
 " got in his Pocket, that 'tis neither *even* nor *odd*,  
 " but partly one and t'other.

These are the *Gassendist's* Arguments, which appear strong and convincing; but the same Difficulty, against the little empty Spaces in the World, occurs with regard to these imaginary Voids beyond it. The Mind is shock'd at the Thoughts of Extension without Parts, and of Space without Matter; and whatever Bounds I may assign to the Universe, my Mind still conceives new Space beyond them.

— *Wherefore Matter must be infinite.*

Consider, my Friend, how obscure this Point is, and what an impenetrable Cloud veils it from the Eyes of Men. If it be impossible for them ever to know the ultimate Bounds of Matter, or to be certain of its being infinite, the Divisibility of this same Matter is another Secret which they must eternally be ignorant of. How can it be conceiv'd that in the Claw of a Gnat (for Example) there should be as many Parts as in the whole Universe? For if Matter be infinitely divisible, there must be an infinite Number of Parts in the least Atom, as well as in the whole World; which is shocking to Reason. And yet this Argument is stronger than that of the *Epicureans* and *Gassendists*, when they tell us, *That an Atom can be no otherwise reckon'd indivisible but with respect to the Callusity of its Essence, which admits of no Void.* But this is begging the Question; for by denying the Possibility of a Void, the Atom of course becomes divisible. Upon the whole, I fancy that, without having Recourse to the pretended Hardness and Solidity of Atoms, the Divisibility of a Fly's Foot into an infinite Number of Parts, cannot be imagined\*. The

\* Of all the Sticklers for the *Indivisibility* of Atoms, *Spinoza* has proposed the clearest and strongest Argument, which runs thus:

" *Materia*

The Moment we pretend to unite the Idea of Infinite to that of Matter, farewell Reasoning: Nevertheless the *Cartesians* attack their Adversaries with cutting Arguments. *However small an Atom may*

*Magna & intricata questio de atomis semper fuit. Quidam asserunt dari atomos, ex eo, quod infinitum non potest esse majus alio infinito: & si duæ quantitates, puta A & dupla ipsius A, sint divisibilis infinitum, poterunt etiam potentia Dei, qui eorum infinitas partes uno intuitu intelligit, in infinitas partes actu dividi. Ergo, cum, ut dictum est, unum infinitum non majus sit alio infinito, erit quantitas A equalis suo duplo, quod est absurdum. Deinde etiam quarunt, an dimidia pars numeri infiniti sit etiam infinita, & an par sit an impar, & alia ejusmodi? i. e. The Question about Atoms has been ever intricate and puzzling; some are for them, because one Infinite cannot exceed another. And if two Quantities, suppose A, and twice A, are infinitely divisible, God, who by one Glance views their infinite Parts, can by the same Power divide them infinitely: Therefore, one Infinite being equal to another, as already said, the Quantity A will be equal to twice A, which is absurd. The next Thing they ask is, If the Half of an infinite Number be also infinite; and whether it be equal to the whole, or not: With many such like Questions." Here you have the Objection in its full Force; and it must be acknowledg'd that it sets in a very clear Light, the Absurdity of supposing an infinite Number of Parts in a finite Body, and of forming an Infinity of Infinites every Time that we divide a Body finite and bounded: But let us see how Spinoza solves this Difficulty.*

*"Adque omnia (says he) Cartesius respondet, nos non debere ea, quæ sub nostrum intellectum cadunt, ac proinde clare & distincte concipiuntur, rejicere, propter alia, quæ nostrum intellectum aut captum, excedunt; ac proinde non nisi admodum inadequate a nobis percipiuntur. Infinitum vero & ejus proprietates humanum intellectum, natura scilicet finitum, excedunt; adeoque ineptum fore id, quod clare & distincte de spatio concipimus, tanquam falsum rejicere, sive de eo dubitare, propterea quod non comprehendamus infinitum: Et hæc ob causam Cartesius ea in quibus nullas fines advenimus, et qualia sunt extensio mundi, divisibilitas partium materie, &c. pro indefinitis habet. i. e. To all which Des-Cartes replies, That those Things which come within the Reach of our Understanding, and are clearly and distinctly conceiv'd, ought not to be rejected, upon account of other Things that lie out of our Reach, and which we cannot fully conceive. Infinity, and the Properties belonging to it, are above human Comprehension, which is finite: It would therefore be very silly and foolish to reject, as false, what we*  
*" clearly*

may be (say they) the East and West Sides of it are not the same, consequently they are separable one from the other; and if so, each of them, by the same Reason, may be divided and subdivided for ever; and as long

“ clearly and distinctly conceive concerning Space, or even to  
 “ doubt of it, because we can’t fully account for Infinity. Where-  
 “ fore *Des-Cartes* calls indefinite all these Things to which we can at-  
 “ sign no Limits; such are, the Extent of the Universe, the Divi-  
 “ sibility of Matter, &c.” *Ren. Cart. Princ. Philosoph. Pars I. & II.*  
*More Geometrico demon. per Bened. de Spinoza, Part II. Pag. 50, 51.*

A Man of Genius, and a good Philosopher, has given a very satisfactory Answer to *Des-Cartes*’s Argument, of which *Spinoza* seems to be so fond. “ *Des-Cartes* (says he) makes but a weak Attack upon  
 “ the Doctrine of Atoms: He would persuade us, that we knew  
 “ very well there was no such things as Atoms, or any indivisible  
 “ Particles of Matter; for if there be any Atoms, however small  
 “ we may imagine them, they have Extension, and may, in  
 “ Thought at least, be each of them divided into two or more  
 “ smaller Portions. Now, ’tis impossible that our Imagination can  
 “ form to itself any thing divisible, without its being perfectly per-  
 “ suaded that this same Thing can be divided: In like Manner  
 “ were we to determine it to be indivisible, such a Judgment would  
 “ clash with our own proper Knowledge.

“ To which ’tis answer’d, That this Reasoning proves nothing  
 “ against the Indivisibility of Atoms. Does the Existence and Na-  
 “ ture of Things depend upon our Imagination, and the Notion  
 “ we have of them? When we imagine them of this or that parti-  
 “ cular Shape, is it any Proof that they can be no otherwise? The  
 “ *Cartesian*, for Instance, conceives, by the Strength of Fancy, that  
 “ every Atom is divisible; and from this concludes against its In-  
 “ divisibility. The *Epicurean*, on the other hand, fancies that an  
 “ Atom cannot be divided; and therefore, in Imitation of *Des-*  
 “ *Cartes*’s way of Reasoning, makes no Difficulty of affirming it to  
 “ be so.” At this rate they are both in the right, since, as they  
 pretend, the Mind conceives no Ideas of any thing, without the  
 Thing’s being so in Reality: And yet one of the Opinions must  
 of necessity be false. But had *Des-Cartes* thoroughly considered  
 the Nature of an Atom, and reason’d upon it in the following  
 Manner, he must have abandon’d the Notion of its Divisibility:  
 “ An Atom has Extension and Parts; but this Extension and  
 “ Parts make up one whole, perfectly solid and simple, because it is  
 “ eternal, and not form’d by Conjunction, nor any Void existing  
 “ betwixt the Particles, and therefore it must be indivisible.” *Des-*  
*Coutures Remarg. sur Lucrece, i.e. Coutures’s Remarks upon Lucre.*  
 Tom I. Pag. 348.

*long as there is Matter, there must be two Sides.* The Mind is here again lost; and if we deal sincerely, it must be allow'd that in these Matters the Learn'd and the Ignorant are upon a Level: So that when such Questions come to be in Agitation, a Philosopher should say with *Cicero*, when talking of the different Opinions about the Soul; *Some God will determine which of them is the true one* \*. The Deity alone, my Friend, can unfold these hidden Mysteries, anent which it has been pleas'd to keep us in Ignorance; and therefore our Enquiry about them is rash and vain: Besides, the Advantage reap'd from the Discovery would not balance the Trouble of the Enquiry. What the better should we be to know whether Matter is infinitely divisible, or not, since we are very certain that it is so, as far as is necessary for all the Purposes of Life? Man, always ready to apply himself to every thing that is extraordinary and marvellous, has for three thousand Years been continually diving, with the greatest Anxiety, into abstruse and unintelligible Matters; so that he ought now to be highly disgusted with an unprofitable Study, that consumes so much Time, and which might be more usefully employ'd. But the Reason why most People apply to wrong Studies is, because the Name of Science is given to vain and trifling Acquirements: Thus blinded by Prejudice, they cultivate superficial Sciences, and neglect what is useful and necessary. *When a Person* (says an eminent Nazarene Philosopher†) *takes it in his Head to become a learned Man, and is seized with a Desire after universal Knowledge, he no more examines which are the most necessary Sciences, either for regulating his Conduct or improving his Mind, but*

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\* *Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit Deus aliquis viderit.* Cic.

† Mallebranche, *Recherche de la Verité*, Livr. lii. Part I. Chap. IV. Pag. 84.



only has an Eye to those who pass for Learned in the World, and to those Qualities which have render'd them remarkable.

This is what ruins many young People, by giving them a Relish for Studies of no real Use or Advantage. They leave the University with their Heads fill'd with dangerous Prejudices, and fully persuaded that their Master, a Scholastick Philosopher, and great Admirer of Chimera's, was an eminent Man: To imitate him is their greatest Ambition.

That Heaven may bestow on thee Health, Wealth, and all solid Happiness, is, dear *Brito*, the sincere Wish of ———

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LXXXVIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

**P**ARIS is so agreeable that there's no leaving it without Concern, yet, though I find it so by Experience, by all Appearance, this is the last Letter I shall write to thee from this City, intending to be gone in three or four Days for *Lisle* in *Flanders*, and from thence to *Brussels*. New Countries will, I hope, give occasion to new Remarks, which I shall punctually communicate.

In my Letters from *Paris* I endeavour'd, with all the Exactness I possibly could, to make thee acquainted with the Manners and Customs of its Inhabitants. The Experience which thou hast ac-

quir'd,

quir'd, by visiting the different Courts of *Germany*, will supply my Omissions or lame Explications. Though I would fain flatter myself that I have left out nothing material, having been pretty full upon the Courtiers, Ministers, Gown-men, Burghers, the Learn'd, the Clergy, the common People; and when the Directors of Consciences and Votaries have pass'd in Review, I have finish'd my Rounds.

The *Mysticks* in *France* form a sort of distinct Republick, which has its particular Laws and Customs. The chief and most considerable of its Members are call'd *Directors*, whose Province it is to order and direct, with absolute Authority, all that's to be done; for though in certain Cases they are, in a manner, oblig'd to have Recourse to the Pontiffs, yet, as they commonly break through that Rule of their Duty, and give a final Determination in Matters of the greatest Importance, they may very properly be call'd arbitrary and absolute Judges.

The Number of Females, in this Sect of *Mysticks*, is much superior to that of Males; of which last there are few or none but the *Directors*, and the rest is compos'd of old Widows, superannuated Wives, and young Girls, who, though they are not cloyster'd as the Nuns, renounce nevertheless all Pretensions to Matrimony, and are call'd *Sisters*, distinguishable by their different Orders and Habits: The most considerable are *Les Sœurs du tiers-ordre*, i. e. *the third Order Sisters*; *Les Sœurs du Scapulaire*, i. e. *the Scapulary Sisters*, so call'd on account of a sanctified Piece of Stuff about a Foot broad which they wear; *Les Sœurs de St. Dominique*, i. e. *St. Dominick, or White Sisters*; *Les Sœurs du cordon de St. François*, i. e. *Franciscan, or Girdle Sisters*, &c. Those of the Holy Piece of Stuff wear a grey Gown, with a short black Petticoat; and the Sisters of the third Order are dress'd

in Black and White. They are all under the Command of certain Monks who are constituted their Directors, and make great Interest to get into those Posts: For thou can't but be sensible, dear *Isaac*, how much more agreeable it is to be at the Head of a Battalion of young Girls, than to command a Parcel of old Wives and decrepid Widows. The different States of this Republick may be rank'd into three Classes; the first is compos'd of the Directors of the Girls; the second of those who are charg'd with the Conduct of Widows, among whom there are still some to be found who have not lost their Charms; the third is form'd of those who are at the Head of the old Women, a wretched dull Post truly; but they must absolutely go through the Drudgery of this Class, before they can be admitted to govern in any of the other two: So that while they command this old Corps of antiquated Matrons, there's no frisking Lamb to be found among the Flock.

There's no such thing as listing in the *Mystick* Sect, without absolutely renouncing all the Pleasures of Marriage. Widows and Girls have a Right to be initiated into it without Examination; but a married Woman must promise to forget Enjoyment, and all the Satisfaction which it afforded her; for which Cause few of them chuse to be received into the Society of the *Holy Sisters*, upon such hard Conditions, particularly if they have Youth and Beauty: And if it happens that any of them, tuned up to a high Pitch of *Enthusiasm*, are willing to bid adieu to the Pleasures of the Nuptial-bed, their Husbands, not at all inclinable to undergo the Abstinence enjoin'd by this *Mystick* Religion, give in their Dissents, and by that means put a Stop to those pious Designs.

This Sect has its particular Saints as well as Customs. A certain *Dominick*, Founder of the monstrous

monstrous Tribunal of the Inquisition, and a great Persecutor, is one of the principal Divinities. *Claire* and *Rose*, two Nuns, are next in Esteem, and *François de Sales* is the fourth in Rank among the Patrons of *Mysticity*. These Men and Women publish'd in their Life-time several Books stuff'd with Maxims of their Religions: And a certain Girl, *Theresa*, has left a full Collection of all the Follies with which a troubled Brain and distracted Imagination furnish'd her; and which is in as great Esteem among the *Mysticks*, as the *Alcoran* among the *Mabometans*.

The *Mystick* Religion commonly leads to *Quietism*, an Opinion invented by Eastern Monks, and which maintains that, when we are in immediate and intimate Union with the Deity, a simple, passive and inanimate Contemplation, supplies the Place of all the Virtues. This Sentiment authorises the greatest Disorders, destroys all Morality, and renders all Actions indifferent: Nevertheless, as the Directors find their Account in this Opinion, they secretly favour it; tho', upon account of the Vigilance of the Magistrates to extirpate this Doctrine, they only instil it into the pious Females, chosen Vessels, to assist them in practising the Precepts of *Quietism*.

Can there be any thing, dear *Isaac*, more commodious than a Religion that indulges the Body in all the forbidden Pleasures, provided the Spirit be elevated towards Heaven? None but Monks are capable of advancing such an extravagant and monstrous Doctrine. Had we not daily Proofs that this pernicious Opinion has but too many Partisans, one would be apt to think that 'tis one of those Chimera's which the Divines sometimes invent, that they may have the Pleasure to combat them. But nothing is more true, than that the



Sentiments ascrib'd to the *Quietists* are what they are fully perswaded of.

A certain *Michael Molina* was the Person that rais'd their Credit, by two Books which he wrote; the one intitled *La Guide Spirituelle*, i. e. *The Spiritual Guide*, and the other, *La Communion Particuliere*, i. e. *Particular Communion*. In the Midst of *Rome*, nay often in the Places set a-part for the Exercise of Religion, he and his Adherents render'd this System fatal to more than one *Roman* Husband; and *Molina*, while his Spirit was above the Clouds, made, with his Body, more than one Cuckold upon Earth. But, at length, the jealous *Italians* recovered out of the Lethargy into which the Discourses and Exhortations of this hypocritical Doctor had plung'd them: He was excommunicated, and condemn'd to a perpetual Prison. The Inquisition judg'd this Punishment sufficient; whereas, had a Man but doubted of the Massacre of the eleven thousand Virgins, or of the great Virtue of Indulgences, he would have been condemn'd to the Flames: But it did not find that the Crime of *Molina* was of so deep a Dye, not having begot many more Bastards, in all his pious Extasies, than the good King *Charlemagne*, whose Amours were no Stop to his being canoniz'd.

The Error of this Doctor, so favourable and indulgent to the Lascivious, is put in Practice by many of the *Mystick* Doctors, particularly those of the first Class: And not a few of the *Scapulars* and *Rosary*, or great Bead, Sisters, who, forswearing Matrimony, in order to embrace a purer and more perfect State, taste all the Pleasures of Love, whereby they are, at last, exalted to the true State of Perfection.

The principal Books, in which we find this commodious Doctrine, are *L'Oraison Mentale*, *composee par un Barnabite*, i. e. *Mental Prayer*, composed

composed by a *Barnabite*, one of the most pious and most vigorous Monks that ever the *Nazarene* Religion could boast of.

*The short Way to Prayer*, and *The Song of Solomon in the Mystick Sense*, are the Works of *Madam Guyon*, a most resolute *Molinist*, and who could not have compos'd them, but after a long Practice; by which the Custom of diverting the bodily Part here below, and the heavenly Part above, became familiar to her.

A Collection of the Reverend Father *Girard's* Letters, containing an Abridgment of the most refin'd Maxims of *Quietism*; for the Use of Miss *Guyot*, Miss *Batarelle*, Miss *Lyon*, and principally of *Sister Cadiere*, his favourite Penitent: With a Collection of Sentences instructive and tending to Perfection. To which is join'd a Philosophical Commentary, by the same Reverend Father, upon those famous Words, *Abandonnez vous & laissez faire*, i. e. *Never mind what's done to your material Part*.

*Advice of Father Sabbatier*, (*the Bosom-Friend of the illustrious Girard*) for the Instruction of Mystick Directors: A Work in which young Directors are taught the necessary Expedients to prevent the dangerous Consequences of Indiscretion in the Reverend Sisters associated as Members of *Quietism* \*.

These are, my Friend, the principal Writings upon which those who are initiated into the *Molinistick* Sect are constantly meditating, and into which they cannot be admitted but by having served their Time to the *Mystick*: So that this last is a sort of Nursery to the other, and has its Visions, Extasies, Miracles, and sweet Contemplations; but does not allow that the Actions of the Body and Soul can be in all Respects separated.

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\* This last Work never appear'd, and the Translator of these Letters is of Opinion that *Aaron Monteca* did but joke.

The Pontiffs \* use all Endeavours to crush such dangerous Opinions: They severely condemn *Molinism*, and have but a very indifferent Opinion of those who give into the Notions of the *Mysticks*. They're for having the *Nazarene* Religion practised in its Purity; and, to do them Justice, it must be allow'd, that they strictly observe the Conduct of the Ecclesiasticks to whom they have committed the Charge of Souls, but for most part lose their Labour. The Disorders in the Popish Religion are not to be attributed to the secular Clergy, who, as I have already told thee, are generally honest, good Men, and very different from the Monks.

The *Curates* ('tis thus the *French* call the Ecclesiasticks who have the Charge of certain Quarters of the Town or Parishes) are commonly charitable to the Poor, and always ready to assist Families, by succouring the Orphan, protecting the Widow, keeping up a good Understanding among Relations, and by terminating domestick Quarrels: In short, they may be called the Fathers of the People under their Charge. Some of the Bishops, in their high Sphere, are influenced by the same Spirit of Religion; so that I can't conceive how the *French* are so foolish, having such honest Priests, as to suffer and entertain among them a Crowd of idle, cheating, debauch'd Fellows, who, in a Moment, destroy what the others have done with so much Toil and Labour.

But what I am now going to say will surprise thee still more, and appear to be a strange Paradox, though 'tis literally true. *The Monks in France are hated by the Nobility, despis'd by the Clergy, and but so, so, lov'd by the People*; and yet they find Means to acquire more Riches and Credit than any Body or Society of the Kingdom. I was at much Pains to search into the Reason of a Thing

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\* The Bishops.

so extraordinary, and am persuaded that nothing has contributed more to support them than the different Opinions upon some Articles of the *Nazarene* Faith, which have so long made a Division in the Kingdom. Before the Protestants were banish'd from *France*, the Papists, out of Hatred to their Adversaries, protected the Monks. *Fansenism* having succeeded to *Calvinism*, the Monks divided, and each Party supports those who are in their Interest: They look upon them as necessary Tools; and, truly, if the Monks be good for any thing, it is to blow the Coal, which, in my Opinion, has preserv'd them in *France*. Perhaps, some time or other, the Nation will be made sensible of the Mischief which they do, and set them a-packing.

Adieu, dear *Isaac*; I wish thee all good Things.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER LXXXIX.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

THY last Letter save one gave me exceeding great Pleasure: Nothing could be writ with more Closeness of Thought, or Strength of Reason. Thy Ideas are clear and distinct; and it were to be wish'd that many Questions, perplex'd and obscur'd by the Methods in which they're commonly handled, were clear'd up in the same Manner.

The greatest Part of Authors who have wrote upon abstracted Points, have left their Subjects  
more



more involv'd than they found them; and, instead of communicating new Light, have encreas'd the Darknefs which obscur'd them before. It is a very common Fault in Commentators, to perplex their Texts to such a Degree that none of the genuine Sentiments of the Original can be known, after they've once pass'd thro' their Hands: And sometimes a very good Author falls into Contempt, meerly on account of the Mistakes and Blunders of those who have pretended to illustrate and explain his Writings.

I am now reading a Book much despis'd by the *Nazarenes* and our Brethren the *Jews*, and yet it contains many excellent Things capable to impress the Mind with an exalted Idea of the Divine Power. The Book I mean is the *Alcoran*, which I had from an *Arabian*, written in the Language of that Country, and without any Commentary. I allow that it contains many Errors contrary to the Writings of our Prophets; but I pass by certain Principles of Religion, and look upon it as the Work of a Philosopher, conducive to the Reformation of Manners, and therefore deserving the Esteem of all honest Men. No Philosopher, not excepting even the wisest and most learned of the Moderns, has given us stronger and more convincing Proofs of the Existence and Power of God, than *Mahomet* has done. See how he expresses himself in the Chapter intitled *Du Misericordieux*, i. e. *The Merciful*, where he introduces the Supreme Being speaking in this Manner: "I have created you all. If  
 " you believe not this, consider the Blessings which  
 " you enjoy: Can you say you have made them  
 " yourselves? I have appointed that you shall  
 " die: I can, when I please, put other Creatures  
 " of the same Kind in your Place, and change  
 " you into a quite different Form. I have united  
 " Souls to your Bodies: If this mysterious Union  
 " surpasse

“surpasses your Comprehension, consider at least  
 “your own Works. Do you produce the Fruits  
 “of the Earth? or am I the Cause of these Pro-  
 “ductions? When I please, your Fields shall  
 “become dry and scorch’d; yet you are haughty,  
 “and say, *What! shall the Grain which we have*  
 “*sown be lost? No; it shall not, must not be.*  
 “Vain, foolish Creatures, to talk at this Rate!  
 “Do but lift up your Eyes to Heaven, and con-  
 “sider the Rain which falls from it, wherewith  
 “you quench your Thirst. Do you extract it  
 “from the Clouds, or is it I who cause it to de-  
 “scend? If I command, it will not fall at all,  
 “or will come down so vitiated that it can con-  
 “tribute nothing to the Fruitfulness of your Land,  
 “nor be proper to quench your Thirst.”

What think’st thou, my Friend, of this Passage?  
 How sublime is it? What exalted Ideas are pre-  
 sented to the Mind? With what Majesty does it  
 represent the infinite Power of the Deity, after an evi-  
 dent and convincing Proof of its Existence, in these  
 few Words: *I have created you all. If you don’t*  
*believe it, consider the Blessings you enjoy: Have*  
*you made them yourselves?* These Words contain  
 the most unanswerable Argument for proving the  
 Necessity of the Divine Existence. Seeing we are  
 sensible that we have not existed from Eternity our-  
 selves, we must of necessity trace our Existence  
 to an eternal Cause, a Supreme Being, which has  
 not only produced all Things, but also preserves  
 and supports them in the State wherein we now  
 behold them. This wise and excellent Rule is a  
 lasting Proof of the Divine Existence, and a con-  
 vincing Argument continually presented to our  
 Eyes. We cannot open them without seeing the  
 admirable Works of the Almighty; and when  
 shut, our Mind supplies the Defect, easily con-  
 ceiving that a thinking, intelligent Being, such as  
 it

it finds itself to be, cannot proceed from a Principle void of Knowledge. Thus the Majesty and Existence of God discover themselves to the Blind, as well as to those who have the Use of their Eyes; and thus, as soon as a Man exists, he is put in Possession of the Means of coming to the Knowledge of him, because he thinks, and is capable of reflecting upon that Thought.

But if Men are so happy as to be endued with the Power of attaining the Knowledge of God, they ought not, on that Account, to pretend to pry into the Secrets which he hath thought proper to conceal from us. It is absurd that finite Creatures should pretend to a perfect Knowledge of the Attributes and Perfections of an infinite Being, or ridiculously aspire to put themselves upon a Level with it. The Knowledge we have of God ought to be the principal Motive to determine our Obedience; and to limit his Power, or to presume that a Thing is impossible because we cannot comprehend the Manner wherein it may be brought about, is a most extravagant Madness, and the Source of the various and different Errors that spring up under all Religions. See, my dear *Monceca*, how *Mahomet* confutes those who set Bounds to the Power of Heaven, and deny the Resurrection of the Body. “*What!* (say the Wicked) “*shall we die, be reduc’d to Earth again, and there- after return to the World? What a surprising Change must this be!* But why should they not rise again? Do they not see Heaven above them, how I have built, beautified and brought it to such a Pitch of Perfection as excludes all Defects? How I have stretch’d out the Earth, made the Mountains to rise, and produc’d all Kinds of Fruits, as an Instance of my boundless Power? Refresh’d the Fields with seasonable Showers, to make them produce the different Grains for

“ the

“ the Reapers ; nourish’d the Palm-tree for the  
 “ Comfort of my Creatures ; and, in short, given  
 “ Life to dead, dry and whither’d Earth ? By the  
 “ same Power shall the Dead rise out of their  
 “ Graves.”

No Philosophy can set before us a more pompous Representation of Divine Power. He who hath form’d Man out of a dead Lump of Clay, can, no doubt, raise him out of the Grave, it being no harder Task to assemble and unite the Particles of Matter again, than it was to animate and put them in Motion at first. Cannot he who hath made all Things out of nothing, do whatever he thinks proper ? There’s nothing so shocking to Reason as that something can be made out of nothing ; and yet not only Religion but true Philosophy also informs us, that Matter must have been created : For, if it was from Eternity, it must be independent, neither owing its Being to another, nor liable to be destroy’d by it ; from which this natural Conclusion follows, that God is not vested with infinite and unlimited Power, because, upon this Supposition, there should be a Being as ancient as himself, and which would have no Dependence upon him. Thus, allowing of a Limitation in the Power of God, he is no longer to be consider’d as infinite, because an infinite Being must be infinite in all Perfections. Matter itself must, upon this Hypothesis, be allow’d to be a God, and to stand upon an equal Footing with the true One. What monstrous Absurdities must flow from a System which supposes Matter coeval with God ? If we make a just Use of our Reason, we can’t help acknowledging that the Supreme Being has created, out of nothing, every Thing that exists. But do we understand this Mystery ? No, to be sure, we do not : Why then should we set Bounds to his Power in other Things, seeing it is most e-



vident that there is nothing which cannot be easily perform'd by him, who out of nothing hath brought all Things into Being? "The Supreme Being (*saith* Mahomet) knows those who are unjust; "he holds the Keys of Futurity in his Hand, and "none besides him is acquainted with it. He knows "all that is contain'd in the Extent of the Earth "and Sea, the Number of Leaves which fall from "the Trees, and the Amount of the Atoms hid in "the Bowels of the terrestrial Globe. There is "nothing dry nor green upon the Earth but what "is written in the Book of Light. He dissolves "your Natures in Death, and knows the Good "and Evil you have done.—Remember the Day "that he said, *Let there be*, and every Thing was. "—He knows what is present, pass'd and to "come. He excels in Wisdom, and nothing e- "scapes his Penetration.—*Abraham*, upon the "Discovery of a shining Star in the Night, ask'd "himself, if that was his God? No, replied he "with the same Breath; my God neither rises "nor sets \*."

Consider, my dear *Aaron*, all these different Passages; see with what elevated Ideas they strike the Imagination, and afterwards, from this Specimen, form a Judgment of the Book. What beautiful Precepts of Morality are diffus'd in this Work? How edifying and suitable to the sublime Notions which it gives of the Divinity? As for Instance: "O ye Faithful, whose Wives and Children are "perhaps your Enemies, beware of their bad In- "tentions! But if you pardon them and leave "them, God will be gracious and merciful to "you. Riches and Children are often Obstacles "that oppose our Obedience to the Divine Will; "but know, that he dispenses exceeding great Re- "wards to the Good and Virtuous, and is to be  
"fear'd

\* The *Alcoran*, in the Chapter of Gratifications, Pag. 28.

“fear’d above all other Beings. Shew Regard to  
 “his Commandments. Obey his Laws. Relieve  
 “the Wants of the Poor. He who is not covet-  
 “ous shall be blessed. If you lend any thing to  
 “God, he will restore it multiplied, and pardon  
 “your Sins. He loves that Men should do good  
 “Offices to one another, because he abounds in  
 “Mercy himself \*.”

Supposing that a *Turk* should observe the Precepts contain’d in this Passage, would he not be a Man of Honour, Piety, Virtue, and worthy of the Esteem of all Mankind? Can any System of Morality be purer than that which recommends Charity, the pardoning of Offences, and which insures the Divine Mercy to the Exercise of those Virtues? Why then should a Book be despised that contains Precepts so directly tending to the Happiness of Society? I could wish Men would distinguish the Good from the Bad in the *Alcoran*, and while they exclaim against some Things, do Justice to others. The greatest Part of those who condemn this Book, have never taken the Trouble to read it; and ’tis probable that were they better acquainted with it, they would speak of it in a different Strain. How many of the Writings of our Rabbies, and even of the *Nazarene* Doctors, deserve as severe Censures as those pass’d upon the *Alcoran*, and yet there is not a Word said against them? I am at least fully persuaded, that their Works don’t suggest a more exalted or refin’d Idea of the Deity. Were we to put the Productions of some *Spanish* Doctors to the Test of a philosophical Enquiry, what a Mass of Errors should we discover in them? How many Principles contrary to Sense and Reason? How many Maxims pernicious to the Welfare of Society? What a glorious Book would a Collection of all the Monkish

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Imper-

\* *Alcoran*, in the Chapter of Deceit, Pag. 110,

Impertinencies make! Sure, a Man who should sit down to write a History of the Mistakes and Blunders of the human Understanding, would be at no Loss for Matter, having such fruitful and copious Memoirs before him.

The *Talmud* of the Rabbies is a hundred times more ridiculous than the *Alcoran*. Don't imagine that a Spirit of Party influences me to think so: In expressing my Contempt of it, I forget that I am a *Caraites*. My condemning this monstrous Work is not because I differ in Opinion from the Authors of it, but as a Philosopher, and as a Man that follows the Light of Nature; and I make no doubt but thou'lt at last be of my Opinion: For, if thou makest Use of thy Reason, 'tis impossible but that thou must chime in with the *Caraites*. Look into the absurd Opinions of the Rabbies, examine those of their Adversaries, make Use of the natural Light which Heaven has given thee, and then pronounce. Sure I am thou must quickly discover true *Judaism*, and that pure Law in the same Perfection it had when first given out by our great Prophet and Legislator.

Consider, my dear *Monceca*, that the Rabbinical *Jews* exclaim against some fabulous Stories in the *Alcoran*, and laugh at the Weakness of the *Turks* for believing such Chimera's. But *Mahomet* never vented such Absurdities as the Rabby *Abraham*, who imagin'd that the Satyrs and Fauns were human Creatures, but imperfect, because, while they were a-making, the Eve of the Sabbath approach'd before God could give them the finishing Stroke; and that for this Reason those Monsters, detesting the Sanctity of that Day, fly to hide themselves in the Mountains and Forests, from whence they return to torment Mankind.

Can Extravagance be carried to a higher Pitch than to look upon the Supreme Being as a mean Statuary,

Statuary, who, not able to finish his Work at the End of the Week, leaves it imperfect? How is it possible, my Friend, to reconcile this Absurdity with the Grandeur and instantaneous Execution of the Divine Operations, to which Nature is all Obedience, upon the Word of Command, changes its Form, and may be destroy'd in an Instant by the same Power that created it in a Moment. The Almighty said, *Let there be Light*, and *Light there was*: He needs only say, *Let Light cease*, and it shall be no more.

Farewel, my Friend; may the God of our Fathers enlighten thy Mind, and direct thee to turn *Caraite*.

Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER XC.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THY Reflections upon the *Alcoran*, my dear Isaac, are very just; and I'm fully persuaded, that the greatest Part of those who pour Contempt upon that Book, without making any Distinction between the good and bad Things contain'd in it, are blinded by their Prejudices. Almost all the *Nazarenes* have false, absurd, and even ridiculous Ideas of the *Mahometan* Religion. They would be less surpris'd at the Attachment of the *Turks* to *Mahometism*, if they enquir'd diligently and without Passion into the Motives which engage them to it.



It is easy to treat, as weak and ignorant, those whose Virtues and other Qualities we are unacquainted with. To this nothing more is necessary, but to suppose them entire Strangers to the Sciences; and consequently that their Ideas are gross, confus'd, and vastly different from those acquir'd by Application and Study: But as a false Supposition commonly leads to a wrong Conclusion, so the *Nazarenes* fall into this Mistake. They judge of the Genius of the *Mahometan* Philosophers and Divines, from the invidious and fabulous Accounts daily given of them by ignorant Travellers and Monks, who are always zealous in running down whatever is contrary to their own Sentiments. Upon the Credit of such Stories vented by some Greek Authors, the *Spanish, French, English, Italian, German*, and other Writers, have ascrib'd to *Mahomet* several Things, not only false, but contradictory to Reason. There is nothing more impertinent, or contrary to the Truth of History, than the Idea which *Moreri* gives us of *Mahomet* \*. If we will believe this Priest, the Lawgiver of the *Turks* was a Man of a very ordinary Character, who, associating with the Monk *Sergius*, composed in Conjunction with him the Precepts of his Law, and sometime after prevail'd with a Gang of Robbers, who had made him their Captain, to receive it. Is not this a very instructive Account of the Matter? And must not those who judge of *Mahomet*, from this Representation, justly regard, as weak and ignorant, all such as embrace his Doctrines? They would

\* *Mahomet*, false Prophet of *Arabia*, was born, according to some Authors, on the fifth Day of *May*, in the Year 570. His Father, who was a Pagan, was called *Abdalla*, and his Mother, who was a Jew, was named *Emine*; both Persons of the meanest Rank. His Religion, consisting of a Mixture of *Judaism* and the Absurdities of some Christian Hereticks, was embraced by some Robbers and Persons of a profligate Character, who knew nothing of God, nor of common Honesty. *Moreri* *Anti Mahomet*.

would perhaps think otherwise, if they had just Ideas of this false Prophet, and understood the Extent of his Genius. The learn'd *Nazarenes* have not been unacquainted with this Truth, but they did not think it necessary to undeceive the People; and therefore imagin'd it was proper to suffer them to continue under a Mistake which seems to favour their own Religion. "*Mahomet* (*says the famous La Croze* \*) had very uncommon natural Talents: He was agreeable, polite, obliging, and well qualified for conversing with all Kinds of People." This is the Character given him by a Christian Author of the East, who wrote a History of *Mahometism*. With regard to his Understanding, it is obvious that he was an extraordinary Person. This may be discover'd with sufficient Evidence, even in the Translations of his *Alcoran*; though, in the Judgment of those who understand the Language in which it was wrote, they give but a very imperfect Representation of the Beauties and Majesty of the Original.

Many other learn'd *Nazarenes* have done Justice to *Mahomet*: But their Books being only in the Hands of the Learn'd, have not remov'd the common Prejudices, which are daily increasing, and carefully improved by the Fables of some *Nazarene* Divines. *Bayle* takes notice of one invented by a Monk; and the Reflections he makes upon the Subject are worthy of such a great Philosopher †. "A Benedictin of the *Netherlands* (*sait* *he*) wrote a Book in *Latin* and *Flemish*, containing a great many idle Tales, and, among others, this following: *A Genoese had so great a Curiosity to see what the Moors or Saracens*  
*" practis'd*

\* *Historical Dissertations upon several Subjects*. Vol. I. Pag. 38.

† *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, in the Article of *Mahomet*.

" practis'd in their Mosques, that he got into one of  
 " them by Stealth, though he knew very well the  
 " Custom, of putting all Christians to Death who  
 " enter'd them, or forcing them to abjure Christia-  
 " nity. He soon found himself encompass'd with so  
 " great a Crowd, that he could not disengage him-  
 " self; when an Accident happen'd which requir'd  
 " him to get out immediately, being very much pres-  
 " sed by a natural Necessity which he could not get  
 " the better of; by which Means he soon found him-  
 " self in Danger of Death, the bad Smell which he  
 " spread around him having discovered the Matter.  
 " He freed himself from this Danger, by giving them  
 " to understand that he had been costive for a long  
 " Time, and upon coming to recommend himself to  
 " Mahomet, had found immediate Ease; where-  
 " upon they took his Breeches and hung them up in  
 " the Mosque, crying out, A Miracle! a Miracle!  
 " — Thus one half of the World laughs at the  
 " other: For doubtless the *Mahometans* are not  
 " ignorant of the ridiculous Stories that are told  
 " of the Monks; and if it were true, that they  
 " knew nothing of them, yet it might reasonably  
 " be believed that they spread Lies and imperti-  
 " nent Fables against the Christian Sects. If they  
 " knew of this Story of the *Flemish* Benedictin,  
 " they would perhaps say, These honest Forgers  
 " of Miracles frame very gross ones for us; not  
 " but they know how to invent others of a much  
 " more refin'd Sort, but these they keep for them-  
 " selves: They drink off the Wine, and leave us  
 " the Dregs."

I shall make some Additions, my dear *Isaac*, to  
 the grave and impartial Remarks of this *Nazarene*  
 Philosopher. If he had travelled among the *Turks*,  
 he would have been yet more fully convinced of  
 the extravagant Folly of this Story, which has not  
 the least Appearance of Truth: For thou know'st,

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the *Nazarenes* who reside in the *Levant* are not allow'd to wear Turbants, but Caps or Hats, even when their Dress is otherwise agreeable to the Fashion of that Country. So that it is as easy to distinguish a *Nazarene* from a *Turk*, as it is to perceive the Difference between the *French* and *Grecian* Dress. How then could the *Turks* suffer a *Nazarene* to continue in their Mosque, till the Necessities of Nature should reduce him to such a Strait? By what Chance could it happen, that those about him should not take notice of his Cap or Hat? What Means could he use to get into the Mosque, with those distinguishing Marks of a *Nazarene* about him? If he was disguised, and had taken a Turbant, what Occasion had he to talk of his pretended Invocation of *Mahomet*? As soon as he pass'd for a *Turk*, he was out of all Hazard. A *Turk*, who under such a Necessity should b-sh-t his Breeches in a Mosque, because he could not get out of it for a Crowd, would run no greater Risque than a *Parisian* that should raise a disagreeable Smell in the Church of the Jesuites upon Saint *Ignatius's* Day. Both would get off at the small Charge of getting their Breeches wash'd. The Imans of the Mosque would not think their Prophets Nostrils had suffer'd by this noisome Exhalation; nor would they punish the Author of it any further than they should think the Action influenced by Contempt: And in this they would act a very rational Part. The Jesuites, to be sure, upon such an Occasion, would not be more tractable than the *Mahometans*. How would they treat a *Jansenist* who should disturb them in the Celebration of their Patriarch's Festival in such an indecent Manner? And how would the *Jansenists*, in their Turn, resent a *Molinist's* profaning the Tomb of Abbey *Paris* by such impure Perfumes? It would be a great



great Happiness to him if he could find an Expedient to save his Life, by causing an idle Trick of his own to pass for one of the Miracles of that Saint; and to swear, that his Constitution not being of sufficient Strength to be Proof against Convulsions, the Holy Deacon had effectually cured him by a sudden Revolution in his Guts. At this all the *Jansenists* would cry out, *A Miracle!* An Account of the miraculous Cure would be carefully inserted in the *Nouvelles Ecclesiasticks*; and the Pontiff of *Montpellier* would publish a Manifesto, to attest its being genuine.

When Philosophers, my dear *Isaac*, enquire into that Partiality which all Men in general have in favour of those Sentiments they've imbib'd from their Infancy, they laugh at the Origin of all the ridiculous Stories, which different Religions suggest to one another. What Absurdities do the common Sort of the *Turks* spread concerning the Creed of the *Nazarenes*? and what strange Fables do the Christians forge concerning us? To judge of a Religion from the Writings of Authors of an opposite Party, is as extravagant as to search for true History in the *Tales of the Fairies*, or the *Thousand and one Nights*, &c.

If we will believe three fourths of the *Nazarene* Doctors, nothing keeps the *Turks* in their Blindness but either their Immorality, or their Ignorance of *Nazarenism*; and yet there is nothing more false. The *Mahometans* are well acquainted with the Sentiments of their Adversaries; and they have several controversial Authors who have confuted them, and that by Arguments which are not only capable to impress the Minds of Persons prepossess'd with Prejudices, as the *Turks* certainly are, but also of those who have just Pretences to Disinterestedness and Impartiality, and want to have their Judgments

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ments determined by the Force of natural Reason\*. It is certain, my dear *Isaac*, that the more Simplicity there is in any Religion, and the less it is burthened with fundamental Points, so much the more easy it is to defend such a Religion. This is that which gives so particular a Beauty to *Judaism*, and demonstrates the Truth and Dignity of it. Now, next to the Religion of the *Jews*, there is nothing more simple than that of the *Mahometans*. I speak not here of Ceremonies; these being only Accessaries, which have no Concern with fundamental Principles, necessary to be believ'd in order to Salvation. Besides, all Religions, excepting that of the reform'd *Nazarenes*, are equally over-loaded with hurtful Usages, and vicious Customs, gradually and insensibly introduced. Every wise Man considers them as Things foreign to Religion, and which have nothing in common with the essential Articles of it. Supposing then that, setting aside the Ceremonies of the *Musulman*, a Pagan Philosopher, quite unacquainted with *Judaism* or *Nazarenism*, should have a *Mahometan* Confession of Faith proposed to him; I doubt not but, after having carefully examin'd it, he would receive it with great Submission, and look upon the Compiler as

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\* The *Mahometans* have wrote several controversial Books against the Christian Religion. It is of some Use to know their Method of disputing against us; which obliges me to lay before the Reader some Extracts from one of those polemical Books. I have them from the Papers of a *Spanish Mahometan*, who was Embassador from the King of *Morocco* to the States General of the United Provinces, in the Year 1610. This Man was by Birth a *Biscayan*, and probably of the Race of those Moors who were long in Possession of a great Part of the Provinces of *Spain*. Having disputed in *Holland* against Prince Maurice and Don Emanuel, the Son of Don Antonio King of *Portugal*, he sent them, after his Return to *Africa*, a Latin Letter, wherein he endeavours to account for his Faith in the best Manner he could. *La Croze's Historical Dissertations upon various Subjects*, Vol. I. Pag. 47.

a great Man, a superior Genius, and one whom God had illuminated in an extraordinary Manner. This was precisely the Case of the first Disciples of *Mahomet*: They were, generally speaking, Pagans. The *Jews* and *Nazarenes* who join'd them, had very little Knowledge, and very gross and inadequate Ideas of their own Religion; and therefore easily suffered themselves to be seduced by *Mahomet's* specious Insinuations. The Beauties and Charms of his Stile had upon them the same Effect which the Excellency of his first Principles produced among the Pagans: We ought not then to be surpris'd at the Progress of the *Mahometan* Religion, or accuse the first Professors of it of Folly or Immorality. The most of the *Arabians* might have embraced it, meerly because they were persuaded of its Truth.

There's nothing more sublime than the *Turkish* Confession of Faith. The most learned of the *Nazarenes* are obliged to own it. Thou may'st judge of it by the following Summary of the *Mahometan* Faith, extracted from the Writings of an *Arabian* Author, and inserted in the Works of one of the greatest Genius's in *Europe* \*. "Whoever  
 " (says this *Mahometan*) wants to understand  
 " the Principles of the *Musulmen*, let him know  
 " that the Substance of their Faith is contain'd in  
 " these Words. *I believe in God only. I believe*  
 " *all his Angels, and all his Scriptures, and all the*  
 " *Prophets he has sent into the World, without*  
 " *Exception, or making any Difference between any*  
 " of

\* Quisquis igitur scire cupit, quæ sit lex Mauris, sciat summum & symbolum fidei Maurorum iis includi verbis: "Credo in unum solum  
 " Deum. Credo in angelis ejus, omnibus scripturis, & prophetis, quos  
 " misit in mundum, nemine excepto, nullâ factâ differentiâ inter aliquos  
 " prophetas & nuncios ejus. Credo in die judicii. Credo præterea quod  
 " quid est, sive nos ardeat, sive non, creatum a Deo. Hac est sacra-  
 " ma quæ inquirenti statim fiet palam." La Croze's Historical Dis-  
 sentations, &c. Pag. 51, 52.

" of the Prophets and Messengers of God. I believe  
 " that there will be a Day of Judgment. And be-  
 " sides all this, I believe that every thing which has  
 " Existence, whether we consider it as good or evil,  
 " was erected by God. This is the Sum of our  
 " Faith."

Is it any Wonder, my dear *Isaac*, that Truths so glaring, and from which flows such a refined System of Morality, should make an Impression upon the Minds of so many different Sorts of Persons plung'd in Paganism? And, as to the *Nazarenes* who embrac'd the *Mahometan* Religion, they are under a Mistake who imagine that the *Musulmen* Doctors did not ply them with Objections of sufficient Force, to raise Scruples and Doubts in the Minds of Persons so little acquainted with their own Religion. They made use of the strongest Arguments of Philosophy to support their Sentiments: And the *Mahometan* Divine, I have just now quoted, employs, in Defence of *Mahometism*, the very same Principles, which serve as a Foundation to the whole *Cartesian* Philosophy; that is, the Necessity of examining the Truth of Things by the Assistance of the Light of Nature, which cannot impose upon us, because it is the only Means God has given us to distinguish between Truth and Falshood. *Almighty God* (says this *Arabian*) never desired, nor commanded, that Man should believe what he could not understand. On the contrary, he has given him an Understanding capable of comprehending all that is possible, and all that exists by a natural Necessity; and to deny, and be incapable of understanding what is impossible \*.

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\* *Neque Deus omnipotens unquam voluit, aut iussit, debere hominem credere id quod nec potest intelligi, nec percipi. Potius fecit hominis intellectum aptum ad percipiendum quid quid possibile & necessarium fuit, & ad negandum & non percipiendum quod impossibile est. La Croze idem. Pag. 48.*



As soon as one acknowledges this Principle, my dear *Isaac*, he must either be very much prepossess'd in favour of his own Religion, or very well instructed in it, not to be sensible, that very strong Conclusions in favour of *Mahometism* may be drawn from it; and that both the *Nazarenes* and *Jews*, who went over to that Religion, might be persuaded of the Truth of it, and suffer themselves to be carried away by Errors which had such a fair and specious Appearance. 'Tis the Fault, my dear *Isaac*, of Divines of all Parties and Religions, that they affect too much to condemn and despise those who espouse the Sentiments and Opinions they oppose. They are not satisfied with asserting that they are in an Error, but must, at any Rate, deprive them of common Sense and Reason.

Take care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*; and live in Happiness and Contentment.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER XCI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

IN my Journey through *Flanders*, my dear *Isaac*, for *Brussels*, I had an Opportunity to examine the military Force of the *French*. All the Towns at twenty Leagues Distance from *Paris* are fortified; and from *Peronne* to *Lisle*, the Capital of *French-Flanders*, every thing has a martial Appearance, both from the strong Fortifications, and the great Numbers of Troops garrison'd in the different

rent Places; where the Soldiers are as punctual in observing military Order and Discipline, as if an Enemy were approaching to attack them. I have been told, that before the late War they were more remiss in their Duty, Peace and Tranquillity having, by Degrees, soften'd them into Remissness, inconsistent with the Severity and Exactness so necessary in the Business of War; but they have now resum'd the ancient Discipline which they had neglected.

The Inhabitants of these fortified Towns are less happy than the rest of the *French*, being the Slaves of three or four petty Tyrants, who, under a specious Pretence of serving the Government, and protecting the Place, take State upon them, and decide the Tranquillity, nay even, in a manner, the Fate of every Burgher. The Governors, the King's Lieutenants, and the Majors, are pretty like the new Sovereign Pontiffs; as these, when once they lay hold of the triple Crown, speedily raise their Friends and Relations to the highest Dignities; so those, though poor when they enter upon their Posts, soon acquire Riches: And, in both Cases, the poor People (who seem to be born Victims to their Protectors) pay for all. I look upon the military Governors (excepting nevertheless such of them as are actuated by Principles of Humanity) like so many Wolves set to guard a Flock of Sheep; and did they only kill a single Ewe in a Day, to satisfy their voracious Appetite, their Comrades would reckon them very moderate. *What! not strangle the whole Flock at once, a strange Instance of Moderation this*, would they say. Just so is it with the Deputy-governors of Garrison-towns; if they rob only gradually, and give (if I may so say) a Breathing-time, they pass for very moderate Men. I fancy, that a certain *Grub-street* Performance, intituled, *L'Art de plumer la poule sans*

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*la faire crier*, i. e. *The Art of fleecing without raising the Hue and Cry*, was compos'd for the Use of these military Officers, who have twenty different Ways of stripping the Burghers without putting it in their Power to complain. For Instance, they are order'd to mount Guard, to go the Rounds, to guard certain Posts; all military Exercises from which Money only exempts them: His Honour, the Governor, out of pure Love and Friendship to the Inhabitants, being willing to excuse them from that Drudgery, is prevail'd upon to accept of a little Money for the Use and Benefit of the Soldiers whom he orders to do Duty for the Burghers. Can there be any thing more just and equitable? The Place must be strictly guarded; and whatever he does, is for the *Good of the Service*: Magical Words, whose Virtue have the Efficacy to fill the Governor's Pockets. As the *greater Glory of God* is the common Cant of the Jesuites, so the Officers do all for the *Good of the Service*: These Words are constantly implied in their Orders, and the common Spring of all their Actions. Thou'lt perhaps ask me, how they can reconcile the Utility of the King's Service with Things entirely foreign to it, and sometimes contrary? All I can tell thee is, that they are fruitful in Expedients: But, after all, they don't stand so much upon Ceremony, do they but compass their Ends. 'Tis not the Business of private Men to judge if the Governor was in the wrong to make the Service of his Master a Screen to his Avarice, or any other Fault.

The Commandants exact a certain Toll for all Provisions that are brought into Town upon Market-days, a Tax to which they have no Right; and the Burghers exclaim strongly against a Practice that affects the Necessaries of Life, but the Governors let them say on: 'Tis for his Majesty's Service

Service that his Officers be well fed; how else could they support the Fatigues of the military Trade? They therefore go on at their old Rate, without minding the Clamours of the People, who strain their Lungs to no Purpose: Not but that the Court, were their Oppressions represented, would check them; and we have even seen some of them severely punish'd. But is there a Necessity to come to an open Rupture? The Burghers imitate the Rats in their Council against the famous Cat, the Destroyer of their Race: The Cry is general, but not one of them have Courage to give the first Blow; so that 'tis a mere Chance if the Court be inform'd of the Conduct of certain Governors, for the Inhabitants are inur'd to their military Tyranny.

Would a Man be free and happy in *France*, he must live in the Provinces subject to Governors-General, who are Noblemen that scorn such mean and base Things: But the Misfortune is, that, being oblig'd by their high Employments to a constant Attendance at Court, they never reside in their Governments; so that the People are govern'd by Magistrates, Judges and Sheriffs, whom they chuse themselves, and are answerable for their Management to the Parliaments, to whose Jurisdiction they belong. These sovereign Courts, the absolute Dispensers of distributive Justice in the Kingdom, diligently observe the Behaviour and Actions of inferior Magistrates.

The Governors of the frontier Places are not the only Tyrants, for, generally in *France*, all your military Men act despotically. The lowest Officers behave with intolerable Pride and Haughtiness to the Burghers, so that a Stranger would conclude the latter to be but meer Slaves to the former, their Sovereigns; and yet among those very Persons whom they despise, there are Persons



sons of far greater Merit than others on whom they bestow their Friendship, and who are in no other Shape valuable but for their Skill in shooting, swearing, and maltreating the poor Peasants. 'Tis thus the *French* characterize the Gentlemen who lead a Country Life, and whom the Officers esteem much more than the Burghers; because they think it a very necessary Ingredient in the Composition of a Gentleman, to be a very idle Fellow.

The *French* Officer is amiable, polite, civil, and obliging to Strangers, as generally all his Countrymen are; but he's extremely heedless, always on the Catch to blast a Woman's Reputation, highly full of his own dear Person, a passionate Admirer of new Fashions, a Debauchee, dainty-mouth'd, but no Fuddle-cap; so ignorant sometimes, that he can scarce read: But repairing that Defect by natural Sense, and an easy agreeable Turn, for two Hours he's a most engaging Companion, but pass that and he's as dull as a Beetle.

Thou must not however, my dear *Isaac*, judge of all *French* Officers by this Character: There are some of them, so far from being liable to those Failings of their Comrades, that they are as thoroughly acquainted with the most abstracted Sciences as the most renown'd *Nazarene* Doctors; and the more to be valued, as they equal them in Knowledge, and have none of their Pride and Vanity. An Officer is as careful to conceal his Learning, as a Philosopher is generally to make his known. This Modesty in the military Man may be partly owing to Policy, because to talk as a Philosopher, is by no means the Way to please a Parcel of giddy-headed young Fellows, who are more curious to be inform'd what Assemblies and Balls are to be perform'd within the Month, than to judge of the Systems of *Copernicus* and

*Ptolmey,*

*Ptolmey*, which may be the most probable. Thus an Officer, by not making a vain Parade of his Knowledge, avoids the Ridicule of passing for a Pedant; though 'tis not impossible but, were he in the learn'd Man's Place, he'd imitate him, and prefix his Name to a Treatise against Pride and Vanity.

When I see a Philosopher, greedy of Praise, exclaiming against Vanity, it puts me in mind of a Wine-bibber preaching up Sobriety and Temperance over a Bumper. This Word of Temperance brings to my Memory a Story of a Dog, which was told me as I pass'd at *Peronne*. This sober Animal regularly observ'd the Fasts, and would have rather starv'd than lick a Bone upon *Fridays* and *Saturdays*: To this Abstinence he join'd many other good Qualities; such as, a constant Attendance at Matins and Vespers, and expressing his Devotion by a thousand little decent Curvets. All Day long he rang'd about the Churches, and if any of his Species was so insolent as to piss against the Walls, he was sure to have him directly by the Neck, and to teach him the Respect due to the sacred Stones.

'Tis not impossible but, upon a Story so well attested, the Monks may, some time or other, revive the Opinion of the *Metempsychosis*. For 'tis not to be supposed that an Animal should be capable of such Knowledge but by the Means of his Soul, and therefore it must have innate Ideas; a Thing very hard to prove: But admitting a *Metempsychosis*, this Opinion becomes more probable. Nor is it extremely difficult even to reconcile this System with the *Nazarene* Faith. All the Monks have to do, is to place Purgatory in the Bodies of Animals; in that Case the Doctrine of *Transmigration* will be no extraordinary Matter: Besides, their Revenue will suffer no Diminution by this new System; for I'm pretty certain, that there's  
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not a *Nazarene* who, for fear of becoming a Post-horse for five or six Years, would not bestow large Alms to be deliver'd out of such a Purgatory. The Missionaries of *China* and the *Indies* bring about many Conversions by the Help of this Doctrine. All who are condemn'd by the *Bonzes* to pass into the Bodies of Animals, which they look upon as unclean, or appointed for the worst Sort of Drudgery, apply to the black Gowns, who alter their Sentence.

Thou'lt perhaps imagine that the Story of the pious Dog is a Jest, but the Fact was affirm'd to be Truth; and 'tis my Opinion, that a great many *Nazarenes* incline to the Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls*. Some of their most eminent Doctors report several Stories that very much favour this Sentiment; and 'tis probable they only wait till the Minds of the People be better dispos'd to receive it, before they adventure to make it publick. I have read in a Book written by a *Nazarene* Doctor, That an Ewe of a certain *Franciscan* went to the Quire the Moment she heard the Monks singing; and that she kneel'd devoutly down, and kiss'd the Ground with great Reverence \*. I am no more surpris'd to see a Sheep do this, than at a Dog's leaping for the Emperor and the King of *France*, and lying down on his Back or his Belly for the Grand Seignior and the Sophi of *Persia*. The Sheep may be train'd up as the Dog; but that such Puerilities, or rather Tricks, should be made use of to authorise a Religion, is monstrous. I'm confounded when I see Persons, set a-part to enlighten others, abuse their Ministry, by propagating such ridiculous Chimera's.

I cannot conclude this Letter better than with a Passage of a *Nazarene* Doctor call'd *Acosta*, a Jesuit, which may be of Service to the *Jews* our Brethren,

\* *Gazai Pia Hilaria*.

## JEWISH LETTERS. 273

Brethren, as well as to the *Nazarenes*. *All Miracles* (says he) *are vain and useless without the Approbation of the Scriptures; that's to say, if they have not a Doctrine conformable to the Scriptures, because of themselves they are a strong Argument of Truth.* How happy would the *Jews* and *Nazarenes* be if the Rabbies and Monks were persuaded of this Truth!

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; may thou be content and happy.

*Brussels*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## L E T T E R   X C I I .

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I HAD not Room, my dear *Isaac*, in my last Letter to inform thee of a Conversation I had at *Lisle* with an Officer for whom the *Chevalier de Maisin* had given me a Letter when I left *Paris*. He receiv'd me in the most gracious and yet reserv'd Manner. I was surpris'd at such a Reception, which appear'd so much out of the Character of a *Frenchman*, and a military *Frenchman* particularly, who is generally lively, brisk and frolicksome. My Friend had given me a Hint that this Officer had a Taste for the Sciences, which rais'd my Curiosity to be acquainted with him. After some general Discourse, we came to talk of my Acquaintances at *Paris*: I named several Men of Letters, and in his Judgment of their Works he discover'd a great deal of good Sense and Skill.

*You*



*You reason, Sir, said I, with such Exactness and Judgment, that one may easily perceive you don't employ your whole Time in your military Occupations.* " I confess (*answer'd he*) that I employ  
 " some little Time every Day in cultivating the  
 " Sciences, and could wish I might devote myself  
 " wholly to Study; but am prevented by the Trade  
 " which I have embraced: So that I am not at  
 " Liberty to make entire Use of my Reason, but  
 " at certain Hours; and may be said to be a Man  
 " only one half of my Life, and the other half a  
 " sort of amphibious Animal, with too much Sense  
 " to be rank'd in the Class of brute Beasts, and too  
 " little Judgment to be plac'd among such as are  
 " really Men: In this State these are my common  
 " Occupations. I tell every Woman with whom  
 " I happen to be in Company a thousand extravagant  
 " Lies, to which they give the Name of *Gal-*  
 " *lantry*. I whisper one Lady in the Ear some-  
 " thing very trifling; she laughs heartily, and so do  
 " I: But should any in the Company demand to  
 " know the Whisper, we should both be at a ter-  
 " rible Loss, and could give no better Reason than,  
 " that 'tis the Custom for People to laugh when  
 " they whisper, that the Company may imagine  
 " something very witty has been said. I take an-  
 " other by the Hand, and make a thousand Speeches  
 " on its Beauty and Whiteness, without so much  
 " as considering whether this Hand, I am lavish-  
 " ing such Encomiums upon, be not ugly, and  
 " capable of giving an Air of Ridicule to all I  
 " say. Once I've got upon this Tone of Praise, like  
 " an Instrument, I must keep to it: 'Tis the Fault  
 " of those who have not real Beauties, not mine.  
 " 'Tis a manifest Breach against the Rules of good  
 " Breeding, to be in a Woman's Company and  
 " not say civil Things to her. I therefore repeat  
 " my daily Litany to the Sex, and if it is wrong  
 " applied,

“ applied, the Lady is to blame, not I: For it  
“ cannot be suppos’d that I will give myself the  
“ Trouble to form a new System of Gallantry  
“ for every particular Woman. A Beau may be  
“ compar’d to a Preacher; this has a certain Num-  
“ ber of Sermons, and the other a certain Num-  
“ ber of Phrases, which serve for Life. As the  
“ Panegyrick upon Saint *Clara* serves for Saint  
“ *Rose*, by changing only the Name; just so, the  
“ soft Things that are proper for the Marchioness,  
“ may be said to the Countess. If the one be ug-  
“ ly, and the other handsome, ’tis not the *Petit-*  
“ *maitre*’s Fault: A Merchant cannot give but  
“ what is in his Shop.

“ I must upon this Head (*continued the Officer*)  
“ tell you a pretty merry Adventure that happen’d  
“ to me some Time since. I was in Company  
“ with a Woman, but under such Absence of  
“ Mind, that I scarce knew I was speaking to her.  
“ She happen’d to pull off one of her Gloves, and,  
“ by Chance, throwing a Glance upon her naked  
“ Hand; *O the beautiful Hand there is!* cried I,  
“ without thinking of what I said. *You laugh at*  
“ *me*, answer’d she, smiling, and mightily pleas’d  
“ with the Compliment; though she really had a  
“ very coarse, ugly Hand. *I know of none* (con-  
“ tinued she) *so ugly. You are mistaken, Madam,*  
“ replied I, never minding what I said: I know  
“ of many much worse. *I challenge you* (said she)  
“ *to shew me them.* In that very Moment, whe-  
“ ther by Chance, or that *Old Nick* would have it  
“ so, I took hold of the other Hand, and said,  
“ *Here’s one, Madam, at least as ugly as the other.*  
“ I then recover’d out of my Lethargy, and at-  
“ tempted to make an Apology for my blundering  
“ Compliment; but ’twas impossible: The Lady  
“ has ever since attributed to Malice what was  
“ owing only to Distraction. I’m persuaded such  
“ ridiculous

“ ridiculous Adventures happen daily to several  
 “ Persons, it being impossible for a Man who speaks  
 “ one half of the Day, without considering what  
 “ he says, not to fall into very gross Mistakes.

“ The Conversation (*continued the Officer*) which  
 “ I have with several of my Comrades contributes  
 “ no more to form the Mind than the trifling Chit-  
 “ chat mention’d above. It generally runs upon  
 “ the Amours and Gallantry of the Garrison, up-  
 “ on new Fashions, and Parties of Debauchery the  
 “ Night before, &c. You are sensible that the  
 “ Time employ’d in hearing and talking of Things  
 “ so trifling and insipid, is so much lost Time, and  
 “ from which I reap no Benefit; and therefore,  
 “ when I reflect upon my Manner of Life, I can’t  
 “ but think, as I have already said, that I’m only  
 “ a Man some Moments of the Day, and then it  
 “ is when alone in my Chamber I endeavour to  
 “ cultivate my Mind by the Help of some good  
 “ Books, and where I privately lament the insipid  
 “ Pleasures that I’m obliged to seek abroad.”

I was surpris’d, my dear *Isaac*, to hear a young  
 Man talk so sensibly. *’Twere to be wish’d* (*said I*)  
*that there were many young Gentlemen in the Service*  
*who had your sedate way of Thinking; we should*  
*soon see among the French what was formerly in*  
*Rome and Athens. The Business of War would be*  
*no longer look’d upon as incompatible with the Sciences;*  
*and the military Men, far from despising them, would*  
*acknowledge their Sway, as the other Orders of the*  
*Kingdom do.* “ My Brethren (*replied the Officer*)  
 “ are far from despising the Sciences. I plainly  
 “ see that you are not, as yet, perfectly acquainted  
 “ with the Genius of the *French Nation*. Wit is  
 “ the Mark at which all the *French* aim; and  
 “ whatever State they happen to be in, they want  
 “ to distinguish themselves by their Genius. This  
 “ Emulation is no more prevalent in the Clergy-  
 “ man

“ man and the Magistrate, than in the Officer:  
“ And as he thinks it inconsistent in a Man of  
“ Wit to despise the Sciences, he praises them,  
“ nay more, speaks of them without knowing  
“ any thing about them, as many others do; and  
“ if he can but persuade his Comrades that he loves  
“ Reading, that’s enough for him. He has a sort  
“ of Library in his Chamber, but looks as little  
“ into his Books as a Court *Abbé* into his Brevia-  
“ ry. People are so fond of what we call *bright*  
“ *Wit* in *France*, that had *Fontenelle* or *Voltaire* but  
“ took it into their Heads to turn Rope-dancers,  
“ they’d soon have had the Pleasure of seeing four  
“ or five hundred Rope-tumblers in all the consi-  
“ derable Towns. Such a one there might be  
“ found among my Friends, who never knew  
“ whether *Des-Cartes* wrote in *Hebrew* or *French*,  
“ though he regularly says, thrice every Day, that  
“ this Philosopher has evidently demonstrated *that*  
“ *the Earth turns round, and the Sun is fix’d*. Ha-  
“ ving heard People talk of the *Cartesian* System,  
“ he happens to remember this Particular, and  
“ seldom accosts any body without making them  
“ as wise as himself; nay further, he’s so prodi-  
“ giously fond of it, that, right or wrong, it must  
“ be one of the fine Topicks with which he daily  
“ entertains five or six Ladies. Another of my  
“ Companions has got by heart half a Score Verses  
“ of *Racine*, half a Dozen perhaps of *Corneille*,  
“ a Phrase or two of *La Bruiere*, a whole Sen-  
“ tence of *Montaigne*, and, by a wonderful Effort,  
“ half a Verse of *Virgil*. Who can blame him,  
“ with such a vast Stock of fine Acquirements,  
“ to reckon himself the most learned Man in all  
“ *France*. Not a Day passes without his thrusting  
“ some of these Passages into Conversation, thereby  
“ often jumbling *Racine*’s Verses with the Scrip-  
“ tures, and a Passage of *La Bruiere* with the



“ Great Mogul’s Slippers ; and all, forsooth, to  
 “ shew his Erudition. You see then that Men of  
 “ his Character cannot be supposed to despise the  
 “ Sciences ; and that to fancy that a *French* Of-  
 “ ficer glories in his Ignorance, is to know little  
 “ about him.

“ But then (*continued the Chevalier de Maisin’s*  
 “ *Friend*) you’d still lie under a greater Mistake,  
 “ should you imagine that all the military Men  
 “ aim’d only at the Appearance of being learned.  
 “ Many of them are really so, particularly among  
 “ the Engineers, whose Employment engages them  
 “ in the Study of Mathematicks. But they are  
 “ forced to reconcile their Talents to the Prac-  
 “ tices of the military State : So that upon coming  
 “ out of their Closets, where they have been hard  
 “ at work upon the most intricate Parts of Ma-  
 “ thematicks and Philosophy, they must whistle,  
 “ sing and dance in publick, and, in one Word,  
 “ commit all the Extravagancies that are essential  
 “ to a Beau. Whatever Aversion they may have  
 “ to submit to this, they would be reckon’d dull,  
 “ heavy, awkward Creatures, and incapable of  
 “ making a genteel Appearance, did they not com-  
 “ ply with the common Custom. Thus, Sir, more  
 “ than one among our Officers, who affect the  
 “ most ridiculous, foppish Gestures, so shocking to  
 “ a Stranger like you, would entertain you with  
 “ the same Seriousness and Simplicity that I do,  
 “ were you alone with them ; and would acknow-  
 “ ledge, as I do, the Ridiculousness of Customs  
 “ that force them to commit such Extravagancies  
 “ invented by People who, being incapable to re-  
 “ commend themselves by their Actions or Con-  
 “ versation, have annex’d Glory to the nice Per-  
 “ formance of insipid Gestures and such like Fool-  
 “ eries. Fortune has favour’d their Folly. Those  
 “ Customs have prevail’d. The whole *French* Na-  
 “ tion

tion has adopted them, and particularly the Officers. So that there's now a Necessity to comply with them, with the small Comfort only left of condemning them when we fall in with Men of Sense. Be not therefore surpris'd, Sir, if I have given you a colder Reception than you expected; the Chevalier de Maisin's Letter gave me too good an Opinion of you to treat you after the *French Mode*."

The sensible Discourse of this Officer, my dear *Isaac*, gave me an Opportunity of reflecting seriously upon the Character of the *French Nation*. Good Sense is to be met with among all the different States, but it would seem that, upon certain Occasions, they dare not follow the Dictates of Reason. Wisdom is swallow'd up in the Torrent of Mode. The Magistrates and the Clergy are as guilty as the Gentlemen of the Army. A young Counsellor affects Gaiety of Dress, and imagines that Black is not so brilliant as the other Colours. He dares not talk Law in Company, lest he should pass for a *Pedant* and, which is worse, a *Rabbin*; a Name more dreaded by the Gentlemen of the Robe, than Taxes and Imposts are by the People. Is it not ridiculous that a Man should be ashamed of his State, particularly so honourable a one as that of dispensing Justice to Mankind; that he should be afraid to shew himself worthy of the Rank he holds, and that he is Master of his Business? Can any thing be more surprising than that he should prefer, to the Satisfaction of receiving Praises suitable to his Profession, the Pleasure of passing for one that has nothing of the Gown-man about him; that's to say, nothing of what he ought to have, and of what constitutes the essential Part of his Duty.

The Clergy are no wiser than the Magistrates. The Prelates and Court Abbots would look upon themselves as contemptible without Equipages, fine

Furniture and Plate; and would be the first to laugh at any among them who would pretend to act in a different Manner. *He's a good honest Man,* (would they say) *and preaches well, but there's poor Dunge in his House.* A Clergyman at Court, who could only bestow wholesome Advices, and preach edifying Sermons, would but make a very dull Figure compared with a Pontiff who spends a hundred thousand Crowns a Year: Provided he keep a handsome Table, let him be an Ignorant, a Prodigal, or wholly abandon'd to Luxury and voluptuous Living, 'tis no matter. When People go to a rich Clergyman's House, they never enquire into the State of his Library, but very often how his Cellar is stock'd; and many of them would blush to pass for Divines. They would have the World think them witty, and would be extremely vex'd that People should imagine they can't judge of a Tragedy or a Romance, or think that they can read no Books but what regard their own Profession. Such a Notion, as it would deprive them of the Character of Wit and of agreeable Companions, is a most frightful Idea, and which they would of all Things prevent. They fancy that a Man who applies himself to certain Sciences is not capable of that Delicacy which others require. But if they made use of their Reason, and were less Slaves to Prejudices and Modes, they would soon perceive that all the Sciences were link'd to one another \*, and that there's no arriving at Perfection in one, without acquiring, at the same time, just Notions of the others.

Adieu. I wish thee Contentment and Happiness.

*Brussels, \*\*\*\*\*.*

\* *Etenim omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum; et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur. Cic. Orat. pro Archia Poeta, in Exord.*



## LETTER XCIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE Manners of the *Flemings* and *Brabanders* are not unlike those of the *French*, their Neighbours; but they differ much in Genius. The People of *Brussels*, and in general of all *Brabant*, are frank, good-natur'd, and tolerably civil; but simple to Excess, and their Simplicity reaches to Stupidity. One would be apt to think, that the thick Air of the Country had an Influence upon the Minds as well as the Bodies of this People.

The Nobility are foolishly fond of Quality. A Poet is not by half so much prepossess'd in favour of his Works, as a *Brussels* Gentleman is vain of his Nobility. There are more *Excellencies* in this City, than in the whole Universe besides; and without this distinguishing Title be tack'd to a Man's Name, he is neither esteem'd nor respected: So see we, that no where are Titles to be purchased at so cheap a Rate as in the *Austrian Netherlands*, where they are become so common that all the different States are, in a manner, put upon a Level. The Gentlemen, so infatuated with their Nobility, have obtain'd Permission to turn Merchants for the better Support of their *Excellencies*, in great Danger of starving; and the Merchants are allow'd the Privilege of ruining themselves by the Acquisition of Titles necessary for that End \*.

B b 3

'Tis

\* The *Placarts* upon this Head were lately published.



'Tis not to be so much as doubted but they improve the Opportunities given them to dissipate their Estates, and then they may again begin to trade till they are in a Condition to purchase new Titles, to be added to the former. 'Tis not, however, the bare Titles of *Count, Baron, Marquis, Duke, &c.* that altogether establish the Merit of a *Brussels* Nobleman: The Antiquity of his Family has a great Influence in his Favour. The Difference of a hundred Years of Nobility, will force Respect to People who otherwise would be very contemptible. In a Convent near the City of *Louvain* there's a genealogical Tree of the House of *Croy*, by which it is clearly proven by a lineal Descent, that the Head of this Family, alive about thirty or thirty five Years ago, was descended, in a direct Line, from *Adam*. I was very much pleas'd to see, that the *Brussels* Nobility were so modest as not to adopt the Opinion of the *Pra-Adamites*; and that they rather chose to draw their Descent from *Adam*, than to admit of an Opinion contrary to the Book of *Genesis*.

If the Nobility of *Brabant* have some Pretensions to Antiquity, they have little or none to Accomplishments or Talents: They are a little more ignorant than the *Spaniards*, and a little more superstitious than the *Portuguese*. In short, Ignorance is the epidemical Distemper of the *Brabanders*, and communicates itself from the common People to the Burghers, from these to the Nobility, and from this last to the Clergy: And all the different Orders seem to contend for a Superiority in Dulness. If we except *Justus Lipsius, Aubertus Mireus*, and a few others, I don't believe there ever was an Author, either in *Flanders* or *Brabant*, worthy the Esteem of the Learn'd. This Country, 'tis true, has produced some bad *Latin* Poets; some Divines of the Class of *Escobar* and *Tambour-*

rin: But a Man might as soon find Snow in the Defarts of *Barca*, as good Poets, great Orators, and able Philosophers, in *Flanders* and *Brabant*. The Jesuites themselves, in these Provinces (a Thing surprising and incredible) have a mean Genius; and their Politicks seem to feel the Effects of a thick, heavy Region: They are not, however, inferior to others in Ambition, but they want the Art of concealing it. They endeavour'd for forty Years to have large Bells at *Brussels*, like those in the Parish-churches: But as this was a Thing uncommon, they could not obtain what they wanted; upon which they address'd themselves to their Brethren at *Paris*, in order to have their Advice in an Affair of this Importance, which could not but greatly vex the Curates, and make the other Monks very jealous. The Jesuites of *Paris*, provok'd at the Stupidity of their Brethren, did not think proper to return them an Answer; but gave the Matter in Charge to a Lay-brother, leaving it entirely to his Prudence to trace out what Expedient he thought proper for their dull Brethren of *Brussels*. This Trustee, proud of the Honour, had a mind to shew them that he had more Wit than all the *Brussel* Ignatians put together; accordingly he wrote them a short Billet, in the Stile of the *Lacedemonian* Epistles, which only contain'd these Words: *Let a publick and solemn Catechising, my Fathers, be your Pretence for which great Bells are necessary to be heard all over Brussels.* The Jesuites luckily happen'd to comprehend the Lay-brother's Meaning, catechis'd twice a Week, and at length obtain'd what they desir'd.

Though they have a very fine Church here, yet that of certain Monks call'd *Capuchins*, exceeds it. They're a Parcel of nasty, ignorant Fellows; the very Excrement of the Monks, and a Nuisance to the State. They subsist upon Charity, have no publick

publick School, pretend to great Humility, go half nak'd, wear a long Beard, are girt about the Middle with a Cord, and in their nasty Habit make a strange Appearance. The common People have the same Veneration for them as the *Turks* have for their *Dervises*: But notwithstanding their apparent Humility and Devotion, few of the monkish Race are so wicked, and that in all Countries. In *Spain* they were at the Head of the Rebels in *Catalonia*, and appear'd upon the Ramparts of *Barcelona* among the Soldiers, animating them to kill and destroy. During the Plague in *Provence*, and while that Country underwent the Punishment of its Crimes, these hypocritical Rogues were busy in begetting Children, to supply the Loss of People carried off by the Pestilence. Two of them carried their Brutality so far, as to ravish a young Girl who assisted with them in the Infirmary; for which they were apprehended, but found Means to make their Escape, and were both, by a Decree of the Parliament, condemn'd to be hang'd up in Effigy.

The Founder of the first Monasteries of these Lazy-bones was a certain *Francis*, a cunning, sly, old Fox, who, during his Life, had the Art of giving an Air of Sanctity to the most extravagant Actions. His Disciples have recorded the most remarkable of them; and there's not one, how ridiculous soever, but they've prais'd to the Skies. *On a certain Day* (say they\*) *a Grasshopper was notifying, by his Song, the Approach of fine Weather. Francis call'd the Insect to him, and having it upon his Finger, Come, Sister Grasshopper, (said he) sing the Praises of the Deity. The little Animal obey'd; and when the Song was ended, Francis thank'd it very politely, and gave it a Song in his Turn.*

Votre

\* Legend of Saint Francis.

*Votre Soin n'est plus necessaire :  
Vous pouvez desormais, partir en Liberté.*

*i. e.*

My Bus'ness now is done with thee ;  
Go, pretty Creature, thou art free.

Thou'lt certainly laugh, my dear *Isaac*, at such Impertinencies, and wilt be at a Loss to determine which is the greatest Fool, he that writes, or he that believes such Things: But here's another merry Story which I have read in the Life of Saint *Francis*. While he was in *Lombardy*, being a little indispos'd, he got a Capon seven Years old to his Supper on a *Friday*, of which he gave a Leg to a poor Man who ask'd him Charity for the Love of God, and who, being resolv'd to put a Trick upon him, kept the Leg till next Day that the Saint was preaching, and then shew'd it to the People, saying, *See what Flesh the Friar, whom you worship as a Saint, eats on Fridays: This was a Part of his last Night's Supper, which he gave me out of his own Hand.* But it appear'd to all the Spectators to be Fish, which made them conclude that the Beggar was disorder'd in his Senses; and when he found that the People persisted in their Opinion, he was asham'd, and ask'd Pardon.

By this thou seest that this *Francis* had the Art of throwing a Mist over the Peoples Eyes. And I'll venture to say, that his Children have lost none of their Father's Talents; and that they have the Art to persuade them, that a Parcel of good-for-nothing Fellows are truly religious Persons.

Though there is no Inquisition in *Brussels*, it would be dangerous to speak freely on such Subjects, the *Brabanders* being of all People the most superstitious. Some Ages ago certain Brethren of  
ours



ours were burnt, who were very wrongfully accused of having abused the Mysteries of the *Nazarene* Religion; and those unfortunate Persons were executed upon the highest Tower of the City-walls. Its Inhabitants make the Death of our Brethren subservient to the Augmentation of their Miracles, by saying, that the Fire which consum'd those unhappy Creatures was seen fifteen Leagues round; and that while it lasted two infernal Figures were perceiv'd, who disappear'd the Moment the *Israelites* were quite consum'd. They have compos'd spiritual Songs upon this pretended Adventure, to feed the Superstition of their Populace: And I myself saw one Day one of their strolling *Amphibians* chanting one of this Sort.

*Accourez tous, pour voir, Peuple fidele,  
Ce Vilain tuif appellé Jonathan,  
Lequel, poussé d'abominable Zèle,  
Assassina le tres Saint Sacrement.*

*i. e.*

Come, all ye Faithful, here and view  
The base, polluted *Jonathan*, a Jew;  
Who in his hellish Zeal did boast,  
That he had stab'd the *Holy Host*.

*Jacob Brito* has given me Account of several Fables recounted by the *Italians*; but *Brabant* and *Flanders* are as famous for false Miracles, and religious Chimera's, as *Italy*. In a Church at *Ghent*\* they shew an Image that had a long Conversation with a female Votary. She was mortified that her Companions had gone abroad to divert themselves, without allowing her to go along with them; and Vexation drew many Tears from her Eyes. *What's the Matter with thee, my dear Child?*

\* The *Beguines*.

*Child?* (said the Image) *Alas, Madam,* (replied the good Soul, for you must know it was a female Image that spoke to her) *I can't tell what I have done to my Companions, but they slight me, and have refused to take me abroad with them. Don't be afflicted,* (replied the Figure) *To-morrow thou shalt be merry with me; thou shalt be wedded eternally.* She said no more, not discovering who was to be the illustrious Bridegroom: But next Day the Votary died; and the Image remain'd with its Mouth open, that none might doubt of the Reality of this Miracle. The People of *Ghent* have an extraordinary Veneration for this Figure, and would not barter it for the *Farnese Hercules*, or the *Venus of Medicis*; and are much surpris'd when they meet with any Strangers who seem to doubt of this Story. *What!* (say they) *you don't believe that the Saint spoke: Nothing is, however, so certain; for every body in Town affirms it, and 'tis written in the Records of the Church.* It would be needless to dispute upon the Reality of these Miracles. All Travellers, and particularly those of a different Religion, act prudently to be silent. 'Tis even dangerous, in many of the *Nazarene* Countries, to explain one's Self with too much Freedom. In *France* it may be done without running any Risk; for, provided a Respect be paid to the Deity, and to the Person of the Prince, little Notice is taken of other Discourse: But in the *Netherlands*, the Monks have almost as much Credit as in *Italy*, and are even as rich. I have been assur'd, that of thirty five thousand *Bonniers* \* of Land which the Province of *Brabant* consists of, twenty nine thousand are the Property of the Ecclesiastical Communities.

If the Priests don't purchase Titles in this Country, 'tis their own Fault; for they are rich enough to

\* I suppose this may be Acres of that Country.

to have as much of *Excellency* as they please. You may easily find a Prior or Superior of a Convent of *Benedictines*, *Bernardines*, &c. who has more Ducats than many *Brussels* Gentlemen have Pence. They that are rich send their Children to *Paris*, where they complete their Ruin, by exchanging the Good of their own Country for the Bad of the *French*. They affect to imitate the Manners and Speech of the *Petit-maitres*, but are so wretchedly awkward that those frolicksome, easy Ais become them as little as the Gates of a manag'd Horse would a *Cheval de Frise*. A *Brabander* who plays the wanton, puts me in mind of the Ass in the Fable that wanted to imitate the Lapdog: Me-thinks I see Master Long-ears stretching his two Fore Legs amorously about his Master's Neck. *Fontaine* was in the right to say, *Let us not work against the Grain*. When one attempts to get out of his Sphere, he becomes ridiculous. The Passion of imitating *French* Manners has lost many Strangers; and more than one *Frenchman* have turn'd their Brains, by attempting to imitate the *English* in their profound Reflections. I admire the Coolness and Tranquillity of the *Dutch*. Nothing discomposes them: They jog on in their ordinary Way, and live at *Paris*, and at *London*, as in the Middle of *Amsterdam* \*.

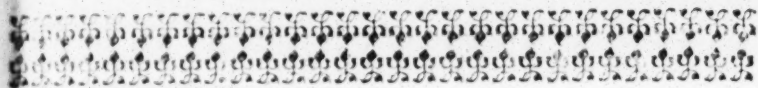
*Brussels*, \*\*\*\*\*.

\* *Et si fractus illabatur orbis  
Impavidum serunt ruina.*

Horat.



LETTER



## LETTER XCIV.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

**I**N one of my Letters, my dear *Monceca*, I entertain'd thee with the Customs and Manners of the *Coptes*, the Descendants of the ancient Inhabitants of *Egypt*. I shall now give thee an Account of what I have remark'd of the other People that reside in these fertile Provinces.

Thou know'st, my Friend, that after the Death of *Alexander*, his Successors reign'd long there, even till they were conquered by the *Romans*: Thereafter they were under the Government of the Emperors of *Constantinople*, and then under that of *Mahomet's* Successors. At last the Sultan *Selim* became Master of *Egypt*, which cost him only one single Battle. *Tonombey*, the last Sultan of *Egypt*, and set upon the Throne by the *Mammelucs*, was found, after the Reduction of *Cairo*, conceal'd in a Marsh, where the *Arabs* thought him safe; and the cruel *Selim*, without the least Regard to the Rank and Dignity of his Prisoner, order'd him to be hang'd. Thus died the last Sovereign of *Egypt*.

What is pretty singular in this Country is, that, among the modern *Egyptians*, we almost see the same Customs that prevail'd among the Ancients. 'Tis even impossible to frequent them any considerable Time, without catching their Humour and Manners.

Thou know'st, my dear *Monceca*, how much the serious, phlegmatick Temper of the *Turks* is



different from the gay, jovial Humour of the *Egyptians*: The former, by Degrees, lose their Gravity; and the Climate of this Country has such an Influence upon the Inhabitants, that though the *Turks* are brave and martial, their Children born in this Country become cowardly as the other *Egyptians*, who are such to the last Degree: And therefore is it that the Laws exclude all Persons born in *Egypt* from military Posts. The Children of *Turks*, by a special Favour, are admitted to be common Soldiers; but this Privilege does not extend beyond the second Generation: And all the Militia that the Grand Seignior keeps up in *Egypt*, are recruited by *Turks* sent from the *European* and *Asiatick* Provinces \*.

This Degeneracy, occasion'd by the Air of the Country, makes the Quality fond of mixing their Blood with that of Strangers: For Men, as well as Beasts, decline in *Egypt*, from one Generation to another. Horses, by Degrees, lose their Speed; Lions their Strength and Courage; and even the Birds here are inferior to those of other Countries.

Indolence and Ease are peculiar to the *Egyptians*: And though this Kingdom be no more than the Shadow of what it was formerly, the People have not changed their way of Thinking. Feasting, Musick, Shews and Dancing are their Delight; and the modern *Egyptians* vie with the Ancients in Taste of sensual Pleasures. But what will invincibly prove how much the Inhabitants of these Countries are attach'd to their ancient Customs, is, that the Difference of Religion makes no Odds with regard to them, every one willingly submitting. 'Tis probable that, before our Ancestors were deliver'd from their Captivity, Circumcision was practis'd in *Egypt*. That Custom is still kept up, not only among the *Mahometans*,

\* *Academi's Account of Egypt*, Par. II. Pag. 67.

who practise it every where, but also among the *Nazarenes*. All the *Coptes* admit of Circumcision, and maintain that it was the Practice of their Forefathers. If this be so, when *Egypt* was altogether *Nazarene*, to be sure its Inhabitants were circumcised alike; since the *Coptes*, who are still above forty thousand in Number, though *Nazarenes*, cause themselves to be circumcis'd, and look upon this Ceremony or Operation to be very essential, so that the Girls are not exempted from it: And some time ago a rich *Copte* refus'd to marry a young Lady for want of it, and could not be persuaded to conclude the Marriage till the Ceremony, which these *Nazarenes* think as essential as we do, was perform'd.

'Tis a certain Fact, that it was establish'd in *Egypt* long before *Herodotus*. This Historian mentions it as one of the most ancient Customs of that Kingdom, which the Inhabitants themselves could not trace back to the Original. *The Phœnicians and Syrians of the Palestine* (says that Author) *acknowledge their having learn'd Circumcision from the Egyptians: Besides, the Syrians that inhabit the Banks of Thermodon and Parthenia, and the Macrons their Neighbours, own that, not long ago, they learn'd the same Thing from them. — As for the Egyptians and Ethiopians, as this Custom is very ancient among them, I can't determine which of them owes it to the other; 'tis however probable, that the latter had it of the former when they began to frequent them* \*.

Some Authors, and even some *Rabbies*, pretend that it was not practis'd in *Egypt* before our Departure; and that it was the Ordinance of *Moses*: Nevertheless, I can't see any great Harm in believing that he had it from the *Egyptians*; and that, finding it conducive to the Neatness of the Body,

C c 2

and

\* *Herodotus*, Book II. Pag. 102. translated by *du Ryer*.

and necessary in the hot Countries, he made it an essential Maxim the better to enforce the Practice. What would persuade me that the *Jews* circumcised after the Example of the *Egyptians*, is, because they have preserved several Customs of those People, and that we observe them still. Never was it seen (says *Herodotus*) that an *Egyptian*, Man or Woman, kiss'd a Grecian's Lips, made use of his Knife, Spit or Pot, or eat Beef that was cut with his Knife \*. We still observe the same Ceremonies with the *Nazarenes*, and no doubt but our Ancestors observ'd them with the Pagans. From whence have we deriv'd these Customs and Rules? They are not commanded by the written Law. They are very ancient. The *Egyptians* practis'd them as we do. Is it not therefore very visible that we have copied from them? I look upon them as superstitious, that have nothing in common with the pure Law of *Moses*; and though I were not a *Caraites*, it would be no Hardship on me to reject all these Chimera's which I never approved, even when I was a Rabbi. For what Concern has the Deity with such Puerilities? If my Heart is pure and without Vice, and that I observe the Law prescrib'd to me by God himself, and given to me by his Prophet, why should I be afraid to fail in any thing? Why should I take up my Head with a thousand little trifling Things, which injure those who practise them, and the Religion that ordains them? Nothing is so beautiful and noble as the *Jewish* Religion in a *Caraites*. But nothing is so despicable and deform'd as the same Religion in a Rabbi. So that the two different Systems are opposite Extremes.

'Tis not in Circumcision alone that the *Nazarene Coptes* thus retain the ancient Customs of the Country: Divorce is in Use among them. Per-

sons

\* *Herodotus*, Book II. Pag. 102. translated by du Tyer.

sons that have been long united in Matrimony, and who have had Children, make no Scruple to separate, and to marry again. The Husband, upon divorcing his Wife, is oblig'd to return what she brought him. The *Coptes* pretend that their Ancestors did always so; and affirm, that Circumcision and Repudiation have been establish'd among them Time out of Mind. The *European Nazarenes* maintain the contrary, and assert, that these Customs were only introduc'd by the *Mahometan* Nations, who invaded *Egypt*: That the *Coptes* have taken them from the *Arabians*, and not derived them from the ancient *Egyptians*; these Usages having been interrupted when *Egypt* was wholly *Nazarene*.

This Opinion is supported by strong Proofs, and I'm very much inclin'd to believe it. But though the Use of ancient Customs has been interrupted among the *Egyptians*, that would be no Reason but that we might have taken a Part of our Ceremonies from them; since those that we have always practis'd, and do still retain, were observ'd in *Egypt* long before *Herodotus*, and that the Time of their Institution was unknown. There's no great Likelihood that what could not be known more than two thousand Years ago, can be clear'd up now.

There are several Facts, of which History has not preserv'd the least Trace, and they lie for ever buried in Oblivion. One is justly surpris'd not to find sometimes, in the Books that we have remaining, the least Hint of the most remarkable Events. Is it not astonishing, that no *Egyptian*, *Greek* or *Roman* Historian, has made mention of *Pharaoh's* Submersion, and that they should but slenderly touch, and with great Contempt, upon our Departure out of *Egypt*; so that they are not only silent about the Passage of the *Red Sea*, but dare even affirm, that our Ancestors were a Parcel of Lepers, dri-



ven out of the Country as a nasty infected People? The Hatred of the *Egyptians* against our Nation may have led those Historians into this Error. But what surprises me is, that in the Annals of *Egypt*, and Histories of that Nation, nothing should be said of an Event so memorable as that of the Destruction of *Pharaoh* and his whole Army. How is it possible to imagine that *Greece*, *Ethiopia*, *Thracia*, and the other Empires bordering upon *Egypt*, could be ignorant of such a Fact as that? And if it be true, that the *Egyptians* out of Pride conceal'd it from Posterity, what Motives could the other People have to be silent upon it? Nevertheless we cannot doubt of *Pharaoh's* Punishment. Our holy Books determine our Belief; and when they have pronounc'd, 'tis our Business to submit. Let us acknowledge then, my dear *Monceca*, that, in the most essential Things, History often leaves us in great Perplexity, and is not capable to inform us. The Books that treat of the *Egyptians*, speak of them as of a People so ancient, that they only relate, in a slight, loose Manner, what their Priests said of their ancient Governments. But how can Credit be given to the Stories and Fables of those Priests, who obstinately maintain'd the Truth and Reality of their Dynasties, which they carried above seventeen thousand Years backward? Another plain Contradiction to our Books and Writings. What's certain is, that *Egypt* is one of the Countries first peopled after the Deluge, and became powerful. *Herodotus* says, that in the Reign of *Amasis*, one of the first Kings of *Egypt*, there were twenty thousand very populous Towns where the Sciences were cultivated. 'Twas this very *Amasis* who order'd *Vulcan* and *Minerva's* Temples to be adorn'd with Colossal Statues, and at the Entrance of the latter a House, made of one single Stone, to be plac'd, which two thousand Seamen could

could not carry off in less than three Years. This House is twenty Cubits in Front, fourteen in Breadth, and eight in Height \*. *Herodotus* speaks of it as if he had seen it. Is it possible that a People who rear'd up so stately Monuments, and who were so far Masters of Arts and Sciences, should have totally forgot so memorable an Event as the Loss of *Pharaoh*? This shews us in how many Things History leaves us in the Dark.

Farewel, my Friend; live content and happy.

Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.

\* *Herodotus*, Lib. II.



## LETTER XCV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

**A**NTWERP, in which I arrived two Days ago, is the most considerable City of *Brabant*. *London* and this Place were formerly Rivals in Commerce, and yet were united with respect to their Interests. These two Cities held a distinguish'd Rank in the *Teutonic Hans*, or *League*; but now the Port of *Antwerp* is destitute of Shipping: *Amsterdam* has carried off the Trade from it, and nothing now remains but the melancholy Remembrance of its pass'd Grandeur. The City is well built, and though the Houses are not magnificent, yet they are regular and agreeable to the Eye. The Citadel is beautiful and well fortified †.

† It has five Bastions nam'd *Ferdinand*, *Toledo*, *Duke*, *Alva*, *Pacifetto*; the last is the Name of the Engineer.

I have read in a *Nazarene* Author \*, something merry enough with respect to this Citadel, and which shews the Simplicity of the *Brabanders*, both in their Actions and Expressions.

When this Fort was deliver'd up by the *Spaniards* to the Duke of *Arscot* in 1577, the Duke, putting his Hand between those of the Person who was to receive his Oath, pronounc'd these Words: *I swear by the Name of God and Holy Mary, that I will faithfully keep this Citadel.* To which it was answer'd in great Ceremony: *If you do so, God assist you; if not, may the Devil run away with your Body and Soul.* And the whole Assembly answer'd very devoutly, *Amen, so be it.* None but a *Brabander* could have contriv'd such an Oath of Fidelity. I scarce think such a clownish, out of the way, Thing could ever have been thought of by the *Swiss* themselves.

The Inhabitants of *Antwerp* are as superstitious as those of *Brussels*, and just as simple; so that the Manners of the two Cities are exactly alike. 'Tis true, the Nobility of *Antwerp* don't trace their Descents so far back as *Adam*, as those of *Brussels* do, but frankly own that they descend from some rich Merchants. But, bating this, they're as much infatuated with their new Nobility as the others are with their ancient.

We see few *Excellencies* at *Antwerp*, the Gentlemen of the first Distinction being satisfied with the plain Title of *Sir*; tho', when they go to *Brussels* to cast a Figure and lord it, I know not but that their Domesticks must give them the high Title of *Excellence*: For the greatest Part of the *Flemish* Gentry have not as yet obtain'd that Title but from their Dependents. The common People *Excellence* them upon every Occasion, but hitherto, in Conversation among themselves, they bestow no such Titles upon

\* *Chappuys*.

upon one another: Yet I'm apt to think their Folly will extend even to this at last; and that the Word *Excellence* will become as familiar in their Assemblies as that of *Sir*.

Though Wit and Sprightliness of Genius are Strangers to *Antwerp*, yet that City has produced eminent Painters. *Ruben*, *Vandyke*, *Otho Venius*, have bred several famous Scholars, and have come near to your *Raphael's* and *Titian's*; particularly, *Vandyke* has distinguish'd himself from the other *Flemings*, and may very properly be call'd a *Ruben* refin'd: For it must be own'd, that, to the Beauty of other Colourings, he has join'd a Superiority in Design; and that he was the only *Flemish* Drawer whose Works have escaped the Genius of the Country, and the Air of the Climate. *Ruben*, *Otho Venius*, and all their Disciples, have often fallen into the heavy, dull Stile; and, notwithstanding innumerable Beauties display'd in their Paintings, yet still the *Flemish* Taste (dull, heavy, and far from the light Touch of the *Italians*, faithful Copyers of Antiquity) is visible in every Stroke. The Women painted by *Raphael*, *Corregio* and *Carlo Maratti*, have something divine: The very Nymphs resemble Goddesses, whereas in the Works of the *Flemish* Painters, the Goddesses often resemble clumsy Chambermaids.

In the Palace of *Luxemburg* at *Paris*, I visited the famous Gallery painted by *Ruben*; and one would almost swear that real Blood circulates in the Figures drawn by that great Man upon the Cloth. Nature cannot boast a Superiority of Colours, though she may with respect to the Contours or Out-lines: And one may safely say, that had *Ruben* been born in *Italy*, he would have been the greatest Man of his Art. Though he resided there for a considerable Time, he could never altogether strip himself of the first Ideas which he had



had contracted in his own Country; and, in his finest Pieces, the *Flemish* Figure was still to be seen: But then he repaired this Fault by so many other Beauties, that it would be highly unjust not to pardon him.

That great Man form'd several Pupils; and, for a considerable Time, *Flanders* was possess'd of several able Painters. Now nothing remains of the famous Schools of *Vandyke* and *Ruben*, but some Pieces in Churches and the Closets of the Curious. The Painters dispers'd up and down *Flanders* now-a-days, are meer Dawbers, compar'd to their old Masters. They retain, 'tis true, something of their Colourings, but are so faulty in the other Parts of Painting, their Design so incorrect, and their Composition so languid, that the *Flemish* School has no Existence but in the Works of the Dead.

One would imagine that the Number of Painters and Sculptures should encrease every Age; and that the Liberal Arts, instead of decaying, should be improved: But the Scholars, so far from surpassing their Masters, grow worse and worse; and what has happen'd to the *Flemings*, with regard to *Ruben* and *Vandyke*, is the very Case of the *Italians*, with respect to *Raphael*, *Titian*, the two *Carracci's*, *Corregio*, *Julio Romano*, &c. If we pass over thirty or forty Years after the Death of those great Men, who lived much about the same Time, *Italy* can scarce reckon up, in any Age, two Painters that deserved the Esteem of all the *Connoisseurs*. About an hundred Years ago they had a *Guido* and a *Carolo Maratti*, whose Names will be transmitted to Posterity. *Trevisani* and *Soloman* are now the only Persons who, in their Art, have arriv'd at that Degree of Perfection which intitles them to Immortality. *Trevisani* is delicate, designs correctly, but then there's something faint and pale in his Colouring, a common Failing in the *Roman* School.

'T would

'T would seem, my dear *Isaac*, that certain Talents are peculiar to some Countries, which the Natives of another cannot acquire to the same Degree of Perfection.

In the flourishing Times of Painting, there were three fam'd Schools; the *Flemish*, which excell'd in Colouring, the *Roman*, in Design; and the *Venetian* seem'd to reunite the Perfections of the two former. *Titian* and *Tintoret* have far surpass'd the *Flemings* in Design, and the *Romans* in Colouring: Nevertheless, if they may be said to unite the Talents of the two other Schools, they neither surpass'd, nor even equall'd them, but in those Parts wherein they least excell'd. A Picture of *Titian's*, well colour'd and well design'd, is not so well design'd as another of *Raphael's*, and inferior in Colouring to one of *Ruben's*: And therefore, my dear *Isaac*, I conclude myself in the right of attributing different Talents to different Countries, and in asserting, that the first Impressions which the Mind receives when it begins to apply to Arts and Sciences, cannot be entirely effaced, whatever Care is taken to root out what's bad, and so perfect the rest. The first Steps in Study are like the first Prejudices imbib'd upon Religion. There's no getting absolutely rid of them; and I'm positive, that when a *Nazarene* turns *Mussalman*, and a *Jew Nazarene*, a thousand Reflections often recur in their Minds, which 'tis not in their Power to banish.

The greatest Men still retain something of their first Taste, and that of their Country, or the School in which they had their Education. That's what the Painters term *Manner*, which neither Study nor Travels into foreign Countries can make them abandon. *Ruben* was a long Time at *Rome*, where many other *Flemings* have likewise work'd. 'Tis true, they refin'd their *Manner*, and purifi'd their Taste; but it still has a Tincture of the first Impressions,

pressions, and all the Pains imaginable can't render a *Flemish* Painter so good a Designer as an *Italian*: And even Love itself, which has sometimes made of a Fool a pretty Fellow, cannot work this Miracle, though of a Locksmith it can make an able Painter. Of this I have seen a singular Instance at *Antwerp*. About thirty Paces from the Cathedral they shew'd me a Well whose Iron Branches, to which hangs a Pulley, were adorn'd with various Foliages, the Work of a Locksmith, named *Quintin Mathys*, who fell in Love with a Painter's Daughter: But though he was a Fellow of good Sense, and an expert Tradesman, he could not obtain his Mistress, her Father not inclining to have a Smith for his Son-in-law. Love made *Quintin* to throw by the Anvil and Hammer, and take up the Pencil and Pallet; and the Desire of pleasing guiding his Hand, he soon became skilful, and distinguish'd himself so well in his new Art, that he excelled all the Painters in *Antwerp*, and had the good Fortune to marry his Mistress. I have read upon the Church Wall, over the Tomb of the Locksmith-Painter, this sort of Epitaph.

*Connubialis amor de mulcibre fecit Apellem.*

Thus paraphras'd:

The Pow'r of Love, the Poets tell us,  
Transform'd a Smith into *Apelles*.

Thus, my dear *Isaac*, I have inform'd you of what is most remarkable in this City, in which, tho' in the Neighbourhood of *Holland*, the *Roman* Religion only is tolerated: Our Brethren are not allow'd to settle there, nor to be in it but as Passengers. There is no Inquisition in *Brabant* or *Flanders*, and yet the People are not less devoted

to the Monks than in *Spain* and *Italy*. This Bigotry is not confin'd to the lowest, but extends to the better Sort, who would think it an Illustration to their ancient Nobility, to persecute all who differ from them in Opinion. This puts me in mind of the Duke of *Montpensier*, who caused hang all the Protestants that fell into his Hands, and all the handsome Women of that Religion to be ravish'd \*: And all this for the greater Glory of God, and because he descended from a King whom the *Nazarenes* look upon as a Saint; without which, such a diabolical Opinion would not probably have possess'd him. That pious King went to persecute the *Mahometans*, even to the Center of *Africa*, where he died, after having involv'd his Kingdom into great Misery by an extravagant mistaken Zeal. Nothing can be more ridiculous, my Friend, than the Blindness of those who think they merit the Esteem of Mankind by destroying their Fellow-creatures, who are guilty of no Crime, nor have given any Provocation. Of all Follies, or rather of all Madness, the most pernicious is that by which certain Noblemen are induc'd to think, that People of their Rank ought to support and propagate, right or wrong, the Religion which their Forefathers profess'd.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*: Heaven preserve all true *Israelites* from such Madnes as this.

*Antwerp*, \*\*\*\*\*.

\* *Brancome's Memoirs*. Tom. III.







## LETTER XCVI.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

I HAVE not yet given thee, my dear *Monceca*, an Account of the famous Pyramids of *Egypt*, erected by the ancient Kings of this Country to serve for their Tombs. Some Ignorants, and even some prejudic'd Men of Learning, have look'd upon these stately Monuments as so many Piles of Stones heap'd one upon another without much Art. But when we come to consider that the favourite Passion of the ancient *Egyptians* was, during their Lives, to erect magnificent Tombs, where their Bodies might be secured against Corruption, the Fate of all the Dead, and against the Curiosity and Avarice of Men, we will not think it strange that Kings, so powerful as those of *Egypt*, order'd these perpetual Monuments to be built, in order to procure themselves that Repose which they wanted to enjoy after Death.

The Names of the Monarchs, by whose Order such magnificent Tombs were erected, are unknown. One *Psammeticus* is mention'd, but no probable Reason is assign'd for his being of the Number. Some have pretended, that *Mercury* caus'd build the three great Pyramids; others affirm, that the most considerable of all was built by that *Pharaoh* who persecuted our Nation, and was drown'd in the *Red Sea*. This Opinion they would support by the Gap in that Pyramid, which

they

they say was never closed: But they are grossly mistaken in this; for if we but examine it with the least Attention, it will plainly appear that it has been open'd, not without great Labour and Pains.

Some ancient Authors say, that one of the most considerable Monuments was built by a famous Courtesan call'd *Doricha*, to whom others give the Name of *Rodope*. *Herodotus* pretends, that the Female who rais'd this Pyramid at the Expence of her Gallants, was Daughter to a King of *Egypt* nam'd *Cheopes*, who ruin'd himself in erecting the others: But this seems entirely fabulous; and I can give no Credit to the Story, though this Author says he had it from the *Egyptians* themselves. Here's what he says of it: *The prodigious Expence which that Edifice requir'd, was the Reason that Cheopes, who wanted Money, basely propos'd his Daughter's turning a publick Whore in a certain House, that he might reap the Benefit of her Prostitution. This Lady not only agreed to her Father's Proposal, but also resolv'd to leave some Monument to perpetuate her Memory; for which Reason she desired every one of her Visitors to give her a Stone for an Edifice which she intended to erect. I have been told, that with those Stones was built that Pyramid which is placed in the Middle of the three opposite to the large one, and which is one hundred and fifty Foot in Front every Way\*.*

'Tis surprising to me how *Herodotus* could relate, with so much Gravity, a Story so seemingly fabulous; and tho' he only writes what has been told him, he ought to have given it as a vulgar Tale, and refuted it with the same Breath. What Likelihood is there that a Lady of Pleasure, so very common as to be able by her Favours to get together a Number of Stones sufficient for the Foundation and low Part of a Pyramid, should have lasting

D d 2

Charms

\* *Herodotus's History, Book I. Pag. 152,*

Charms to engage so many Lovers as were necessary to defray the Expence of this magnificent Building? At first one would be apt to think, that the giving of a Stone was a very cheap Way to purchase a fine Lady's Favours; but upon second Thoughts, and when it is consider'd that this same Stone was to be of Granate Marble, and brought from a Quarry about two hundred Leagues distant, it must be own'd, that they who furnish'd the last Stones, purchas'd the Favours of such a common Creature at a very dear Rate. Perhaps the ancient *Egyptians* were not over delicate in Amours, but for their Generosity it cannot be disputed.

These Pyramids, in all Appearance, were formerly faced with Marble, though not now; because the Sovereigns who had Occasion for Marble, chose rather to strip them than to fetch it from such a Distance.

The *Arabian* Authors give a very ludicrous Account of the Origin of the Pyramids: They affirm, that they were built long before the Deluge by a Nation of Giants. Every one of them brought from the Quarries to the Place where the Pyramids are, a Stone of twenty or twenty five Foot long, with as much Ease as a Man carries a Book under his Arm \*. So that there was no more Trouble in erecting a Pyramid, than a Child would have in building a Castle with Cards. But an unlucky Accident happen'd to one of those Giants. In my former Letters I mention'd that famous Pillar of *Pompey*, the thickest and highest in the World. The Giant that carried it under his Arm, and who, to ease him, chang'd it from one Arm to the other, happen'd, misfortunately, to break one of his Ribs, by Inadvertancy in the removing of it. However this did not stop his Journey; for he arriv'd with his

\* *Mallet's Account of Egypt, Part I. Pag. 104.*

his Packet under his Arm, and had his Rib set to Rights by a skilful Surgeon.

When all is said and done, *Herodotus's* Story is more tolerable than that of the *Arabians*. I could wish that Men respected one another more, and that the Historians had a better Opinion of Mankind than to think them capable of believing such ridiculous Fables. The Generality of Writers make a bad Use of the Privilege of transmitting certain Facts to Posterity: They disguise and dress them up to their own Fancy, and rather leave to future Generations a whimsical Collection of their own Ideas, than a true Account of what has pass'd. All Nations have a great Number of Historians, insufferable Compilers of Fables. The *Turks* have the Expounders of their Laws; the *Jews* many of their Rabbies; and the *Nazarenes* their Monks. Whoever would study History, cannot be over careful in the Choice of Authors that he takes for his Guide. The first Prejudices in historical Matters are not more easily shaken off than in Cases of Philosophy. One is propos'd in favour of an Historian as of a Philosopher; and 'tis as unpardonable an Excess to give an implicit Faith to *Herodotus*, as blindly to adopt all the Opinions of *Aristotle*. It requires Judgment to read to Advantage even the very best Books; for there are none but what, in some Passages, are liable to human Frailty. Our Business should be to discover them, and to supply the Defect by the Opinion of those who are of opposite Sentiments upon that Occasion.

I am now reading the Books which thou sent'st me from *Paris*, and take care to put those wise Precautions into Practice as much as possibly I can. The Merchant of *Marseilles*, who forward-ed thy Letters, has imparted to me an Adventure lately happen'd in his Country, which is merry



enough; and here it is in the very Terms that he wrote it.

## L E T T E R.

SIR,

YOU won't perhaps be angry that I tell you a merry Adventure occasion'd by a famous Procession that was made here some Days ago. The Monks had a mind to place an Altar in the Street, to repose the Shrines which were carried through the Town. They built a kind of Dome, supported by Pillars of Wood, and cover'd with Branches; and under the Dome was form'd a Grotto of Leaves, where they design'd to place a Figure representing Saint *Mary Magdalene*. That it might the more resemble the Original, they undress'd a young Girl of fifteen, and put her in a Posture the most proper to represent the expiring Saint. She was laid on a Bed of Turf, cover'd with nothing but Hair, so artfully dispos'd, that few Parts of her Body were left naked and expos'd to Sight. They had thus undress'd this young Girl, because in *Provence* they have a Notion that Saint *Magdalene* had no other Vestment but her Hair, while she was in the Cave of Saint *Bawm*; and order'd the living Statue to stir as little as possible. The Procession fil'd off before the Statue, and the Bishop, when they pass'd, ordering that the Relicks of the Saint should repose for some Minutes upon it, the Statue, touch'd with a Fit of Devotion, quite forgot her Part, and put herself in a Posture of kneeling, upon which all the Hair fell off; and the pretty Damsel remaining in the pure State of Nature, offer'd to the Eyes of the Spectators Beauties too lively for a dying Person. The Bishop, a truly pious Prelate, was very much scandaliz'd at the Folly and Impertinence of the Monks, and accordingly interdicted them, by way of Punishment

for

for the Execution of such a mad Project; and is so enrag'd, that, by all Appearance, it will be no easy Matter to prevail with him to restore them to the Functions of their Offices.

*I am, &c.*

I wish, my dear *Monceca*, that this Adventure may make thee laugh, as it did me. 'Tis not the only Instance in which the Monks have expos'd themselves. The *Coptes* have a Ceremony which their Priests perform every Year to the Honour of one of their Patriarchs, not unlike this. A Man, quite naked, appears on a Tomb, and harangues on all the fine Things which were pronounced by this Patriarch when he rose from the Dead. All the Successors of this *Coptic* Pontiff hold him in great Veneration, and tell us that his Manners were as pure as those of the Angels. But what may be depended upon is, that the Patriarchs who are now chosen, do not in the least resemble this Saint: They abuse the Religion of which they are the Depositaries, sell all the Permissions which they grant, and Money can purchase every thing with them: So that a *Copte*, with the Assistance of the Priest, and under the Banner of his Permission, may safely commit the worst of Actions. Thus Divorces are very common among them. The Moment a Man is dissatisfied with his Wife, or that a Wife is not pleas'd with her Husband, the Patriarch separates them, without enquiring into the Cause of their Quarrel, and without endeavouring to reconcile them, for fear of losing the Fees which such Separations bring him: For you must know that a Part of this Pontiff's Revenue arises from the Misunderstandings betwixt Husbands and Wives.

Did the *European* Priests but enjoy such a Privilege, they would be much richer than they are.

What

What Treasures would jump into their Coffers, and what Havock would there be in Matrimony, could the *Nazarenes* but have such a Privilege! 'Tis my Opinion, that if the Sovereign Pontiffs had a mind to renew the ancient Croisades, they need only proclaim that those who list'd themselves should be loos'd from Matrimony, to raise an Army more numerous than that of *Xerxes* against the *Greeks*, the only Expedient I can think of for renewing such useles and ruinous Wars as the *Nazarene* Princes made in those Climates. Yet in the Time of those Croisades, the *Europeans* flock'd together in Crowds, and abandon'd their native Country, to go and get themselves knock'd o'th' Head in another, which they could not long keep. The mad Humour ran so high for going upon these Expeditions, that the very Women would have a Share of the Croisades, and the Fatigues of that holy War. A great Number of Ladies at *Genoa*, of the first Rank, arm'd cap-a-pee, resolv'd to go for *Egypt* with a Monk at their Head, who rais'd this charming Recruit. The *Roman* Pontiff wrote a very long Letter to those Heroines, which began thus: *To his noble and dear Daughters in Christ, the noble Ladies Carmendini, Ghisulfi, Grimaldi, &c. We are apprized by your Letters, and by what our dear Son, Philip of Savona, Lecturer to the Brethren of the Lesser Orders, writes us, that you, and many other pious Women of Genoa, inspired from above, have resolved to go to the Holy Land, &c.* What think'lt thou of this *Genoese* Squadron? Is not such a christian Spirit in the Fair Sex very edifying?

Adieu, my Friend; I heartily wish thee all imaginable Happines.

Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.

LETTER



## LETTER XCVII.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

OF all the ancient philosophical Doctrines, my dear *Monceca*, that which has been most despised in latter Days, was in greatest Vogue in old Times, and is still among the *Indians*. The Doctrine of the *Metempsychosis*, or *Transmigration of Souls*, which *Pythagoras* taught, was adopted and received by several great Genius's. *Plato* maintain'd it. *Ovid* \* and *Virgil* †, in many Places of their

\* *Mente Deos adiit, & quæ natura negabat  
Visibus humanis, oculis ea pectoris hausit.*

Ovid. *Metam.* Lib. XV.

Thus translated by Mr. Sewell:

He, though to Earth confin'd, yet mounted high,  
Rose in his Soul, and travell'd through the Sky:  
What Nature to his mortal Sight deny'd,  
The Eye of Reason to his Mind supply'd.

To this Elogium of *Pythagoras* we ought to add that of his System.

*O genus attonitum gelidæ formidine mortis,  
Quid Styga, quid tenebras, & nomina vana timetis,  
Materiem vatum, falsique piacula mundi?  
Corpora, sive regus flamma, seu tabe vetustas  
Abstulerit, mala posse pati non ulla putetis.*

Ovid. *Metam.* Lib. XV.

i. e.

O ye whom Horrors of cold Death affright!  
Why dread ye *Styx*? — vain Dreams of endless Night,  
The



their Works, have declared in its Favour. The Siamese Philosophers, and the *Brachmans*, are convinced of it.

It

The Poets Fiction, — fancy'd Miseries  
Of a forg'd Hell; — for neither Flames surprise,  
Or slow, consuming Time our Bodies wear:  
Depriv'd of Sense, nor Pain nor Grief they bear.

Swell,

† O Pater! anne aliquas ad cælum hinc ire putandum est  
Sublimes animas? Iterumque ad tarda reverti  
Corpora? Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido?  
Dicam equidem; nec te suspensum, nate, tenebo:  
Suscipit Anchises, atque ordine singula pandit.  
Principio cælum, ac terras, camposque ligentes,  
Lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque astra,  
Spiritus intus alii; totamque insusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem, & magno se corpore miscet.  
Inde hominum, pecudumque genus, vitæque volantum,  
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub aquore pontus.  
Igneus est ollis vigor & cœlestis origo  
Seminibus: Quantum non noxia corpora tardant,  
Terrenique hebetant artus, moribundæque membra.  
Hinc metuant cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque, neque auras  
Respiciunt clausæ tenebris & carcere cæco.  
Quin & supremo cum lumine vita reliquit:  
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus omnes  
Corporeæ excedunt pestes. —  
Donec longa dies perfectæ temporis orbe  
Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit:  
Æthereum sensum, atque auræ simplicis ignem.  
Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,  
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno:  
Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,  
Rursus & incipiant in corpora velle reverti.

Virg. *Æneid.* Lib. VI.

Thus translated by Mr. Dryden:

O Father! can it be that Souls sublime  
Return to visit our terrestrial Clime?  
And that the gen'rous Mind, releas'd by Death,  
Can covet lazy Limbs, and mortal Breath?

*Anchises*

## JEWISH LETTERS. 311

It seems surprising, at first, that so false a System should have had such a Currency, and should have found Adherents for so many Ages, whilst other erroneous Opinions of the ancient Philosophers fell into Contempt, or were forgot. But when we carefully examine the Opinions of *Pythagoras*, and strip them of all the Absurdities they are charg'd with by those who have confuted them, we shall not be so much surpris'd at their Continuance. The Error of those who have adher'd to them, is  
to

*Anchises* then in Order thus begun  
To clear those Wonders to his God-like Son.  
Know first, that Heav'n and Earth's compacted Frame,  
And flowing Waters, and the starry Flame,  
And both the radiant Lights, one common Soul  
Inspires, and feeds, and animates the whole.  
This active Mind, infus'd through all the Space,  
Unites and mingles with the mighty Mass.  
Hence Men and Beasts the Breath of Life obtain,  
And Birds of Air, and Monsters of the Main.  
Th' etherial Vigour is in all the same,  
And ev'ry Soul is fill'd with equal Flame;  
As much as earthly Limbs, and gross Allay  
Of mortal Members, subject to decay,  
Blunt not the Beams of Heav'n, and Edge of Day.  
From this coarse Mixture of terrestrial Parts,  
Desire and Fear, by Turns, possess their Hearts;  
And Grief and Joy: Nor can the grov'ling Mind,  
In the dark Dungeon of the Limbs confin'd,  
Assert the native Skies, or own its heav'nly Kind.  
Nor Death itself can wholly wash their Stains,  
But long-contracted Filth e'en in the Soul remains.  
Then are they happy, when, by Length of Time,  
The Scurf is worn away off each committed Crime,  
No Speck is left of their habitual Stains,  
But the pure Æther of the Soul remains.  
But, when a thousand rolling Years are past  
(So long their Punishments and Pennance last)  
Whole Drove of Minds are, by the driving God,  
Compell'd to drink the deep *Lethean* Flood,  
In large forgetful Draughts, to steep the Cares  
Of their pass'd Labours, and their irksome Years,  
That unrememb'ring of its former Pain,  
The Soul may suffer mortal Flesh again.

to be pitied; but their Fault is excusable, being occasion'd by deceitful Delusions, capable to seduce the best fortified Minds.

The Reasons that have determin'd certain Philosophers to believe the *Metempsychosis* are so difficult to be confuted, that the *Nazarene* Doctors who attempted it, have given them new Strength. A Man must be an excellent Metaphysician entirely to defeat the *Pythagorean* System. This Task, only reserv'd for the *Des-Cartes's*, the *Locke's*, and the *Bayle's*, is not within the Reach of the Schoolmen. A Jesuit has shew'd us the Arguments which he and his Brethren make use of to convince the *Indians* of the Absurdity of the *Transmigration* of Souls, so weak and easy to be confuted, that those People must be very silly, or very ignorant of the Principles of *Nazarenism*, if they don't destroy them to all Intents and Purposes. Without entering upon a Summary of *Pythagoras's* System, I shall only mention that of the *Indians*; and after I have discuss'd the Objections of the Jesuites, I hope I shall make it appear that my Assertion, of their not being conclusive, is not groundless.

The *Brachmans* lay it down as a first Principle, that all good Actions ought to be rewarded by the Deity, and that all bad ones ought to be punish'd. *The Wisdom of God* (say they) *requires this Order. His Justice demands absolutely that he should punish Wickedness, and reward Virtue; consequently no innocent Man can be punish'd, nor guilty Man be rewarded. Why does it then happen daily that a Man, from the Moment of his Birth to that of his Death, is oppress'd with many Evils, without having deserved them? Why do we see other Persons enjoy Happiness without Interruption? There's a Necessity, since this is plainly the Case, that by Actions previous to Birth, those who are unhappy deserved their Misfortunes, and those who are happy the good*

Things

*Things they enjoy.* And this proves the Necessity of the *Metempsychosis*.

But let me add something to the Reasoning of the *Indian* Philosopher. God cannot be the Author of Evil; for 'tis directly opposite to the Essence of a Being sovereignly good and perfect. He cannot be the Source of the Misfortune that befalls an Infant, not yet stain'd with any Crime; and therefore you must admit of two first Principles, one good which dispenses Happiness, and another bad which spreads its Venom among the Creatures, or allow of the *Metempsychosis*.

The Jesuit, in answer to this Argument, cannot fly to the Transgression of *Adam*; because the *Indian* may very justly tell him, *Your Reasoning is nothing but a begging of the Question; you found your Proofs upon what I don't allow. I deny that there was an Adam form'd by the Divinity\*. The Circulation of Souls has been from Eternity; it was and shall be for ever.*

In order to prove that the Fault of the first Man is the Cause of the Happiness and Misery of Mankind, those with whom we dispute must admit our sacred Books to be authentick; and therefore when an *Indian* agrees that what is written in *Genesis* was reveal'd by God, he must be persuaded, that the Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls* is erroneous: But, when he denies the Authority of this Book, it would be needless to offer it as a Proof of the Causes of Moral Good and Evil.

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\* Some learned *Indians* pretend there are three Things which are eternal, viz. the Supreme God, the Souls, and Propagation, which they express by these three Words, *Padi, Pachou, Pajum*; and that by going back from the Son to the Father, from the Father to the Grandfather, from this to the Great Grandfather, and so on, there is no finding out a Beginning. See Father Buchet's Letter on the *Metempsychosis*, inserted in the Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the idolatrous Nations, Tom. II. Pag. 181.



'Tis very difficult, my dear *Monceca*, to convince a learn'd *Indian* by Arguments that prove the true Causes of human Misfortunes, which he ascribes to the Faults committed by the Souls during the Course of a former Life. The Arguments made use of by the *Nazarene* Missionaries are trifling and poor. I demand of *Idolaters*, (says a Jesuit \*) if all the Beings in the World ought to be alike? Ought there to be nothing but Suns and Stars? Does not the Good of the Universe require that all the Parts, of which it is compos'd, should be subordinate to one another; and that the different Beings should be differently placed? They agree to this: Why then acknowledge (say I) that 'tis the same with respect to the moral World, that all cannot be placed in the Rank of Sovereigns; and that, for the sake of good Order, there must be a Subordination?

In answer to these general Arguments an *Indian* may reply: "I grant that good Order requires a Subordination in the different States of the World, though I might upon good Grounds refuse it, were it not to shorten the Dispute; for, God having Power to make all Men equally happy, if he thought proper so to do, this Equality had no ways clash'd with good Order, nothing more being necessary than to create them all virtuous. In that Case, Laws, Princes, Magistrates and Judges became useless, and consequently Subordination was no longer necessary: But 'tis not against this that I exclaim, rather a more substantial Evil. Your Comparison of the Sun and Stars with happy and misfortunate Men, is not just. Though the Moon is less than the Sun, yet the Word *unfortunate* is not applicable to that Planet: Neither the Gout nor Gravel, Hunger

\* See Father Bucher's Letter on the *Metempsychosis*, inserted in the *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the idolatrous Nations*, Tom. II. Pag. 181, towards the End,

“ Hunger or Thirst, torment her ; she’s under no  
 “ Apprehension of losing Sight or Hearing : In-  
 “ sensibility is (if I may so say) her Blessing ; for  
 “ the Sun in his meridian Splendour can do her  
 “ no Harm. But the Case differs with Men :  
 “ their Misfortunes are real. The Cruelty of a  
 “ Sovereign, the Partiality of a Judge, Distempers  
 “ and Plagues oppress them. Had they not de-  
 “ serv’d those Misfortunes in a former Life, the  
 “ Order establish’d by the Divinity in the moral  
 “ World would be as bad, as that which he has  
 “ establish’d in the Planets is worthy of Admira-  
 “ tion. ’Tis less contrary to Reason, and less  
 “ impious, to assert that God can’t prevent Evil,  
 “ than to make him the Author of it \*.”

I shall go on, my dear *Monceca*, with the Exa-  
 mination of the Jesuit’s Arguments. *The Doctrine*  
*of the Indians* (says he †) *furnishes us with a De-*  
*monstration unanswerable. The chief Reason that*  
*induces them to admit of the Metempsychosis, is the*  
*Necessity of expiating the Crimes of a pass’d Life.*  
*Now, according to their System, nothing is more easy*  
*than Atonement for Sins. All their Books are full*  
*of special Favours obtain’d by the Pronunciation of*  
*these three Words, Chiva, Rama, Harigara. Upon*  
*a first Pronunciation of them, all Sins are blotted*  
*out ; and if thrice repeated, the Gods, thereby ho-*  
*nour’d, are at a Loss to find a suitable Reward to*

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the

\* *Μυρία γὰρ ἦν ἐπιεικέστερὲν ἀσθένεια καὶ ἀδυναμία*  
*τῷ Διὶ ἐκβιαζόμενα τὰ μέρη. πολλὰ ἔρᾶν ἄτοπα παρὰ*  
*τῇ ἐκείνου φύσιν καὶ βούλησιν ἢ μήτε ἀκρασίαν, μήτε*  
*ἀνομίαν ἧς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Ζεὺς αἴτιος. Tolerabilius enim erat*  
*infinitas partes dicere Jovi ob ejus imbecillitatem vi facta*  
*agere multa improbe contra ipsius naturam et voluntatem*  
*quam nullam esse libidinem, nullum scelus quod non Jovi*  
*auctori imputandum esset. Plat. adversus Stoicos, P. 1076.*

† *Father Bachel’s Letter, &c.*

*the Merit. Then the Souls swimming (if I may be allow'd the Expression) in Merits, are no longer oblig'd to animate new Bodies, but fly directly to Devendiren's Palace of Glory. Now, there's scarce an Indian, the least devout of them all, that does not pronounce these Words above thirty Times a Day, and some a thousand Times, and thus force the Gods to acknowledge themselves insolvable. Moreover, Sins are as easily cancell'd by bathing in certain Rivers and Ponds, by bestowing Charity upon the Brachmans, by Pilgrimages, by reading the Ramagenam, by celebrating Festivals to the Honour of the Gods, &c. This being so, there's not a single Indian that goes out of the World without a full Load of Merits, or with the least Stain of Sin; consequently, as there is no Sin to expiate, what's the Use of the Transmigration of Souls?*

*If the Indians, my Friend, are puzzl'd to answer the Objections of the Jesuites, they must be void of Common Sense, or entirely ignorant of the Tenets of the Nazarene Religion. Let me for a Moment personate the Brachman, and speak thus to the Missionary. I see, my dear European, that the People of your Country blow hot and cold; and that they alternately adopt and throw off certain Customs, according as they favour the Opinions which they would prove. You condemn our Custom of pronouncing the Words Chiva, Rama, Harigara; and pretend, that since they remit Sins, all Souls must go to Heaven, and never more return to the Earth. But pray tell me, what's the Use of Purgatory which you believe, or seem to believe? Your Sovereign Pontiffs have found a hundred thousand Expedients, by the Means of Indulgences, to exempt the Nazarenes from it. How many different Sorts are there of them? Some serve for three, and others for ten thousand Years; and some of them clear all Accounts: And these are as easy to be had as those that are ob-*  
tain'd

tain'd by pronouncing Chiva, Rama, Harigara. The Pontiffs have even made them as common as Good-morrow \*. Every Man who salutes the first Person that he meets in a Morning, with a *Sia laudata* Maria, i. e. praised be Mary, gains a thousand Years Indulgences; and he that answers Amen, gains five hundred. There's scarce an Italian that has the least Spark of Devotion, who does not give forty Good-morrows in a Morning; which, at the current Price of Indulgences, must purchase forty thousand Years of Pardons, without reckoning up twenty thousand which he gains by answering Amen to those who are before-hand with him in calling out this happy *Laudata*. Moreover, the Sins of the Nazarenes, by a Motion of the Priests and Monks Arms over the Head, are cancell'd, as well as by bestowing Presents, by going in Pilgrimage to Loretto, by reading the Lives of Saint Ignatius, Saint Theresa and Saint Dominic, and by celebrating the Festivals of Saints. And this being the Case, there's not one of them departs this Life without a Load of Merit, and without the least Spot of Sin; consequently, when there are no more Sins to be expiated, of what Use is Purgatory? Let me beg of you, my dear European, to explain its Utility; and when you have clear'd up this, I shall thereby be furnish'd with convincing Arguments to enforce the Necessity of the Transmigration of Souls. You'll no doubt tell me, that the Indulgences only operate with respect to those that are in a State of Grace, or who truly repent of their Faults; and that half a Million of *Laudata's*, &c. will not give a Moment's Ease to the Pain suffer'd by those who have not deserved the Effect of the Indulgence. *The Case is just the*  
E. e 3. *same*

\* That Strangers and Travellers may have a Share in these Indulgences, the Bull by which they are granted, is fix'd up at the Door of almost every House of Entertainment, printed in Italian,



same with the Words Chiva, Rama, Harigara: They're of no Service but to such as are truly sensible of their Faults; and therefore, as there are but few who are so, the Metempsychosis is absolutely necessary. You'll perhaps ask me of what Advantage can these Words be, since they've no Power but when they are pronounced by Persons truly penitent, and since this Contrition of itself takes off the Imputation of Guilt? I will freely own, that I'm as much at a Loss about their Utility as about Indulgences: But our Priests assure us of their Power; and what Reason there can be that we should not believe our heavenly Guides as much as you do yours, I cannot find out. To determine the Preference betwixt Laudata, &c. and Chiva, &c. 'tis necessary first of all to know if there's a greater secret Virtue in the Disposition of the Letters of the former than in the latter Words. I fancy you can as little satisfy me upon this Difficulty, as about the Misfortunes of Mankind. Therefore, since I am persuaded that the Divine Being cannot take Pleasure in forming unhappy Creatures, and that the Light of Nature tells me such a Thing is contrary to his Essence, you must give me Leave, my dear European, to be persuaded, that Men are punish'd in this Life for the Faults committed in a former: And you must also be so good as to allow me my Chiva, Rama, Harigara, and the washing of Sins in Rivers, by way of Compensation for your purgative Gesticulation and indulgentiary Good-morrows, of which, for my part, you may remain in quiet and peaceable Possession.

I'm at a Loss to think, my dear Monceca, what Answer a Jesuit can make to an Indian who starts such Objections. He has no other Resource left but to fly to sound Philosophy, to make use of what the great Men of these latter Ages have discover'd concerning the Nature of the Souls of Men and those

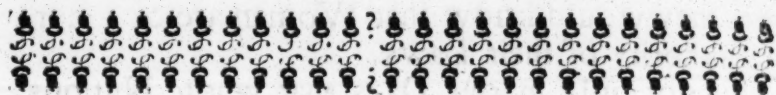
of Beasts, and to prove, by solid physical Reasons, that the Metempsychosis is repugnant to the Essence of Things, and that consequently there could be no such Thing: That there is but a certain Number of Souls, that therefore it might happen sometimes there either would be Bodies wanting Souls, or Souls that could find no Bodies; because 'tis against the establish'd Order of Things, to fix the Number of Children to be born, this Number depending on the free Will given to Men. And here, my dear Monceca, we have a proper Opportunity of presenting that Axiom of Mallebranche, That God acts always by the simplest Methods. But a Jesuit would be very loth to owe the least Obligation to a Cartesian Philosopher, and particularly a Cartesian belonging to the Fathers of the Oratory; and would much rather chuse to argue in the most wretched Manner. Had Des-Cartes or Locke been Members of the Society of Jesus, at this Day their Writings would have been explain'd in Lewis le Grand's College; and had Bourdaloue been a Benedictin Monk, the very Lay-brothers of the Jesuites would have boldly, and with Impunity, criticis'd his Sermons.

Farewel, my dear Friend; may the God of our Fathers heap on thee his best Blessings.

Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.



LETTER



## LETTER XCVIII.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

**A** VOYAGE I have made, my dear *Isaac*, along the *Nile*, has prevented my answering thy Letters sooner. On my Return to *Cairo* I found several, which I read over and over with great Pleasure, and still found them the more entertaining and instructing, the oftner I perus'd them. An *Arabian* Acquaintance of mine, and who accompanied me in my late Trip, has conceiv'd a very great Esteem for thee, upon seeing what drops from thy Pen; and confesses, that the Wisdom so much sought after by the Philosophers, is not attainable but by a close Study of the Heart of Man, of which there's no unfolding the Recesses, but by examining it under different Forms.

An *Egyptian* and a *Parisian* differ widely in Sentiments: Both are under the Influence, 'tis true, of the principal Passions common to all Mankind; but they assume so many different Forms in their Hearts, and produce Effects so different, that 'tis not at all knowing Men in general, by being acquainted with the Manners of a particular Nation. A *Sicilian* who never was out of *Messina*, or a *Mahometan* who never saw any other Place but *Constantinople*, look upon Adultery to be a horrid Crime, to which the Mind of Man cannot, without Remorse, be addicted. Thus they are ignorant to what Lengths the Folly and Caprice of  
Men

Men are carried; for had they been in some Countries, they would know that Women are common by Authority of their Laws.

'Tis not only in our Days that whole Nations have coupled promiscuously as the Beasts \*. *The Auses (says Herodotus †) have no Women in particular, but enjoy them indifferently after the Manner of Beasts. The Men assemble together every three Months; and when the Children, brought up by their Mothers, are strong enough to walk alone, they are brought to the Assembly; and the Men, to whom they first address themselves, are reputed their Fathers.*

Is not this an admirable Proof of Legitimacy? But after all, I would prefer this Custom, ridiculous as it is, to the barbarous Law of the *Nazarenes*, which proscribes Men from the Moment of their Birth, and condemns them, by the Name of *Bastards*, to perpetual Infamy. Is there any thing so contrary to Nature, as the Custom of making a Difference between the legitimate and illegitimate Son, as if they had not equally a Father, could not be alike virtuous, or equally useful to Society?

The Laws of the *Mahometans* are more reasonable, in my Opinion, than those of the *Nazarenes*: A *Turk* is under no Necessity of rendering his Child unhappy; and a Son born of a *Circasian* Woman is upon an equal Footing with the Child of a *Turkish* or *Egyptian* Lady in his Seraglio.

As the Law of Nature is the Source from whence all other Laws ought to flow, their Goodness and Justice consist in their Conformity with it. There's no better Civilian than that internal Sentiment within us, and which the Divine Being has

\* *Pietro de la Valle*, Tom. I. Pag. 140.

† *History of Herodotus*, Lib. IV. Pag. 313.



has engrav'd in our Hearts in Characters indelible\*. However learn'd a Legislator may be, the Moment that he introduces Customs and Rules contrary to the Maxims of Natural Law, I despise him, and look upon them as Arguments of a subtle Sophist, tending to obscure Truth, and to smother Reason.

By examining, upon this Principle, all the Laws made to proscribe certain innocent Creatures, from the Moment they come into the World, they will be found not only absurd, but even contrary to Humanity. What! a Father has a Child, to whom he is persuaded he has given Birth, and acknowledges him to be his own; but because, forsooth, his Mother has not perform'd certain Ceremonies, to which Men have been pleas'd to give the Name of *Marriage*, must this Child, when grown up, be look'd upon as infamous, the Love of his Parents made a capital Crime to him, and have no Share in the Honours of Civil Life! Though this Injustice has been in part repair'd by *Legitimation*, yet the Persons whose Misfortunes they thereby endeavour to diminish, will be look'd upon as inferior to the Generality of Mankind. I cannot therefore but conclude, that this is one of the most lamentable Mistakes of the human Understanding. To me the Custom of the *Auses* is preferable to this: They immediately acknowledg'd that the Children, in general, belong'd to the Republick, and left to Instinct the Choice of particular Fathers.

Should we go back to primitive Ages, we would see that the Patriarchs made no Distinction between the Children of Wives and Concubines. *Jacob*,  
after

\* *Conscientia* (says *Tertullian*) *poteſt obumbrari, quia non eſt Deus; extingui non poteſt, quia a Deo eſt. i. e.* Conſcience may be obſcur'd, becauſe it is not God; but cannot be quite extinguiſh'd, becauſe it is from God.

after marrying two Sisters, had Children by two Concubines whom his Wives procur'd for him; and yet we don't find that the Patriarch made any Difference between his Children. They were all alike Heads of Tribes, and we their Descendants have preserv'd the prudent Custom of not branding with Infamy the Children begot with our Mistresses; but our great Familiarity with the *Nazarenes* has almost communicated some of their Prejudices to several of our Brethren.

How different soever the Opinion of some People may be as to the State of Children born of Concubines, we may still see in other Cases Men more opposite to one another. How would a jealous *Italian* relish the Ceremonies us'd in the Marriages of the *Nasamones*, a People of *Lybia*? *The Wedding-night* (says *Herodotus*) *the Bride gives a general Invitation to the Guests to lie with her, and every one as he performs, presents her with the Present which he brought along with him for that Purpose* \*. A jealous *Sicilian* would never put up with such a Ceremony, nor chuse, I dare say, to purchase a very considerable Fortune at so dear a Rate. Nevertheless this Custom, which appears so monstrous to us, is still in Use, at least in part, among the Savages of *America* †; and those very People, so wild in their Notions, have however several other Customs to be imitated by the most civiliz'd, and best govern'd Republicks. The ancient *Nasamones*, mention'd already, held Virtue in so great Esteem, that *they would by no means take an Oath, without laying their Hand upon the Tombs of Men esteem'd for their Justice and Honour* ‡.

Account,

\* The History of *Herodotus*, Lib. IV. Pag. 310.

† The Voyages of *Pietro della Valle*, Tom. I. Pag. 101.

‡ The History of *Herodotus*, Lib. IV. Pag. 310.

Account, my dear *Monceca*, if thou can'st, for this strange Medley, and reconcile, if 'tis possible, Ideas so wise and just, with the Extravagance of a Bride's lying with all the Men that come to her Wedding. I am confident, that when thou hast maturely consider'd this extraordinary Conduct, thou'lt acknowledge, that 'tis impossible to fix the Point to which the Errors and Prejudices of Men may carry them; and that, to form a just Idea of their Character, and the Oddness of their Tempers, a Man must visit the most distant Countries, and study *Man* in the Manners and Customs of the most differing Nations. 'Tis only thus, that one can learn what all the Reflections in the World cannot teach a Man who was never out of his native Country. I acknowledge that a learn'd Man, shut up in his Closet, and anxious to be inform'd, has the Assistance of Books written by Travellers: But reading does not come up to one's seeing the Countries of which he gives the Description. I look upon a Man of Learning who, by travelling, has made himself acquainted with the Manners of different People, as a skilful Painter who always copies after Nature; whereas he that owes his Knowledge to Books, draws his Pictures from Plates often incorrect.

When a Man spends some Years in visiting different Countries, to reap some Benefit from what he has seen, he ought to make Reflections on certain Particulars which have made less Impression upon him than others, because he was prepossess'd with them before he travell'd: And this ought to be done the rather, seeing the reflecting on those very Particulars is the readiest and surest Way of discovering the Characters, Tempers and ways of Thinking of such Nations. For Instance; when a *Frenchman* goes to *Constantinople*, he is not much affected with the Plurality of Wives, because be-  
fore

fore he left *France* he knew that the *Turks* had Seraglio's: He is more curious to inform himself of the inner Parts of these Seraglio's, which can be of no great Instruction, than to consider the Motives that may have induc'd the *Mahometans* to allow of Plurality of Wives, or to examine and compare their Arguments with those of the *Nazarenes*, who can have but one at a Time.

'Tis certain, that a Philosopher who examines, without Prejudice, the Customs of the *Turks* and *Nazarenes*, must conclude in favour of the former with regard to the Multiplicity of Wives, and the divorcing of those who give them Cause of Complaint. The *Mahometans* have made of Marriage a Ceremony, which serves to render Men happy three different Ways. According to their Law they may wed three Wives; so that the first may serve for bringing into good Alliance: And as the Women whom they marry for the Sake of Protection, seldom bring Fortunes with them, they find in the second the Wealth which was wanting in the first; and in the third, may please their Fancy as to Beauty and personal Merit, having already secur'd Protection and Fortune.

If Marriage is only a Band between two Persons of different Sexes, that they may live happily together, and be useful to Society, three fourths of *Nazarene* Marriages are as pernicious to the one as the other. When a Woman happens to be barren, both she and her Husband are in a manner useless to the State. By an absurd and unreasonable Law an innocent Husband is punish'd for his Wife's Defects, and must not flatter himself with the agreeable Title of *Father* while he lives: And this being the Case, is there any Reason to be surpris'd at the Jars between Husband and Wife among *Nazarenes*? or at the criminal



Excesses to which some of them have abandon'd themselves?

Were it allow'd in *France, England and Germany*, &c. to marry a second Wife when the first is incapable of being a Mother, or to divorce her for the Sake of a bad Temper; what horrid Debaucheries and enormous Crimes might be avoided? In that Case two Persons, who hourly wish one another dead, would be permitted to seek others with whom they might live comfortably and agreeably.

The *Nazarenes* not only condemn Divorce, but even Polygamy, as a heinous Crime. I'm at a Loss to account for the Custom of having but one Wife, and why they imagine that the Divine Being is offended with a Plurality of Wives. 'Tis a Custom which they've deriv'd from the Pagans\*, and with which we are forced to comply in the Countries under their Government: For among the *Israelites*, our Fore-fathers, the Plurality of Wives has always been allow'd of, as a Thing not only useful to private Persons, but also to the Republick. The *Nazarenes* believe our sacred Books, why then do they oppose Customs which we find authoriz'd in them by the greatest Men? Did not *Jacob* marry two Sisters at the same Time? and had he not, besides them, two Concubines? *David*, the Royal Prophet, whose sacred Hymns are loudly sung in the *Nazarene* Temples, whether Papists or Protestants, pick'd up a young Woman in the last Days of his Life, set apart for Repentance: And the Number of Concubines which his Son *Solomon* kept, was equal to his Wealth. He was the richest Prince of his Time, in Gold and Silver; and his Seraglio was crowded with pretty Women. I know, my dear *Monceca*, that we don't give into the Superstition of the *Nazarenes*;

and

\* The ancient *Romans*.

and that with us, faithful Observers of the *Mosaick Law*, all amorous Pleasures, except Adultery, are allow'd: And yet we are forced to constrain our Inclinations in the Affair of Procreation, and have almost adopted the Custom of the *Nazarenes*.

Adieu, my dear Friend; let us pity the Folly and Blindness of a deluded People, and endeavour to enjoy sensual Pleasures that are allowable.

Cairo, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER XCIX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

**B**EFORE I proceeded for *Holland*, I was desirous to see *Liege* and *Aix la Chapelle*, two Cities in the Neighbourhood of *Brabant*, which, I was assur'd, deserv'd the Attention of a Traveller; and I must own that I'm not at all sorry for the ten or twelve Days spent to satisfy my Curiosity.

*Liege* is a pretty large and populous City, adorn'd with a few fine Buildings. The Pontiff is the Sovereign, and his Clergy share with him in the Government of it. Formerly this Chapter consisted of the first Noblemen in *Europe*. There was not a *Canon*, a Name which the *Nazarenes* give to certain Priests, but what was of a distinguish'd Birth. When the Sovereign Pontiff of *Rome*, call'd *Innocent II.* crown'd the Emperor *Lotharius*, all the *Canons* who assisted at that Ceremony

remony were mostly of royal Extraction. There were among them nine Sons of Kings, fourteen Sons of Dukes who were Sovereign Princes, twenty nine Counts of the Holy Empire, and eight Barons. All these Princes and Lords are now metamorphos'd into pitiful, mean Burghers; and when a Man is made a Licentiate in the University of *Louvain*, he may be admitted a *Canon* of *Liege*, and Member of the Supreme Council of State. 'Tis true that he has only the Prerogative of commanding the wickedest People in the Universe, the *Neapolitan* Populace, compar'd to that of *Liege*, being discreet and regular. They both deserve the Neighbourhood of Mount *Vesuvius*; and the People of *Leige* have as much Occasion for Earthquakes now and then, as the *Neapolitans*. However wicked the former may be, yet they want not Protectors, as they pretend, in Heaven, who, in consideration of so many Pounds of Incense and Wax yearly, easily obtain the Remission of their Crimes. Sometimes these Protectors come to visit them, and to discover the Mines of Sea Coal. One of the Saints, charg'd with the Care of their Affairs in the Celestial Court, enter'd the City upon a certain Day in the Habit of a Pilgrim; and, after he had discover'd the Mine to a Burgher, disappear'd, by which he did a very material Piece of Service to the City. The Coal drawn out of these Mines is call'd *Houille*, from a certain Farrier call'd *Prudhomme le Houilloux*, the very Man to whom the Guardian Saint of *Liege* address'd himself. I would not however include the Burghers and Nobles in the Character given of this People: They are polite and friendly, and entirely different from the Vulgar, whom I only mean when I speak of the People of *Liege*.

The Inhabitants of *Aix la Chapelle*, where I now am, are much more courteous and affable.

This

This City is large and tolerably handsome, notwithstanding the Shocks which it has met with twice or thrice by Fire. After it was plunder'd and demolish'd by *Attila*, it was rebuilt by *Charlemagne*, who declar'd it Capital of *Gallia Transalpina*, and made Choice of it for the usual Place of his Residence. He caus'd build the great Church in which he lies interr'd, and in which his Tomb is seen to this Day. Some *Nazarenes* have assur'd me, with a very confident Brow, that at the Time of the Dedication of this Church, two Pontiffs, long since deceas'd, took the Trouble to rise from the Dead, in order to assist at this august Ceremony: They left Heaven early in the Morning, arriv'd at *Aix la Chapelle* about Nine o'Clock, were present at Divine Service, din'd with the Prelates whom *Charlemagne* had invited to a splendid Entertainment, and set out again for Heaven about Four in the Afternoon, where they arriv'd before the Gates shut. — *This is travelling to some Purpose!*

These Things ought not to surprise thee; for the *Nazarenes* tell many more absurd Stories: For Instance; they pretend to have, in a Chest preserved in the Church of *Aix la Chapelle*, the very Manna which fell in the Desert for the Nourishment of the *Israelites*; with some of the Leaves and Blossoms of *Aaron's Rod*, which flourish'd miraculously in the Tabernacle. If any of our Rabbies should write that such Relicks were preserv'd in a Synagogue of the *Levant*, how would we be laugh'd at? and what Lashes should we receive from a Crowd of *Nazarene* Doctors? What have they not said, and perhaps with Justice, about many Things in the *Talmud*? But I scarce can think that there is any thing more extraordinary in that Work, which the reasonable Part of the *Jews* do not admit but with certain Restrictions,



and by Explanations which excuse the Text in the Places where it appears to be faulty.

The *Manna* and *Aaron's Buds* are not the only remarkable Things that are shewn in this Country: There's a surprising Quantity of little Pieces of Bones, Locks of Hair, and Bits of Stuffs, enchas'd in Gold and Silver Cases, which are in such Veneration, that some of them are sent to do Honour to the Coronation of the Emperors. The Magistrate of the City carries in Ceremony, from one End of *Germany* to the other, these venerable Rags, to which he joins *Charlemagne's* Sword and Belt, which are none of the most inconsiderable Relicks of this Place. Formerly the Emperors were crown'd at *Aix la Chapelle*, and the most of *Charlemagne's* Successors chose also to make that the Place of their Coronation. At length, *Charles* the Fourth absolutely settled the Thing by one of the Articles in the *Golden Bull*, ordering that the Emperors should be first crown'd there: But 'tis not so now; and the only Ceremony which they still observe is, a Deputation to the Magistrates, notifying a new Election, to which they are to transmit the Imperial Ornaments and Relicks already mention'd. After this the Emperor declares, in whatever Place he is crown'd, *that if the Ceremony was not perform'd at Aix la Chapelle, 'twas particular Reasons that hinder'd him from repairing thither; and that he does not pretend to make any Infraction upon the Rights and Privileges of that City:* And this done, the Emperor is named, *Canon of Aix*, and sworn accordingly, the Day of his Coronation. After which the Magistrate carries back the Sword and Belt, with all the miraculous Implements, which are all replaced in the Vestry of the Church, and shewn to none without Money: So that *Charlemagne's* (tho' dead above nine hundred Years

Years ago) Bones and Garments have still a Right to cefs Strangers who have any Curiosity.

I'm surpris'd that, among so many sacred Relicks, they have not placed the good Pontiff *Turpin's* Club, so well known in the old Chronicles of *Charlemagne*; as also the Head of his Nephew *Roland's* fine Horse did very well deserve a Place among them, though he had not the Talent of Fairiship as *Renaud's* had: But then the Difficulty was, that *Ariosto* and *Boyardo* have shifted him into so many different Hands, that it would have been no easy Matter to make People believe the Piece was genuine and real; whereas the good Man *Roland* lost his Horse but once, and found him with as little Trouble again as *Sancho Pancho* did his Ass. 'Tis ten to one if honest *Roland* would have light on what he lost so easily, had not his Cousin *Astolphus* brought back his good *Sense* which was carefully preserv'd in a Bottle in Paradise, and delivered into his own Hands by Saint *John*. If the good *Sense* of every *Nazarene*, whose Brains are evaporated, were to be bottled up in Paradise, all the Glass-houses in the Universe could not furnish the Celestial Mansion with a sufficient Number of good *Sense* Cases; and none but a Power Supreme can operate so great a Miracle.

Though the Relicks of *Aix la Chapelle* are very profitable to that Town, by the Concourse of pious *Nazarenes* who flock to see them, yet its hot Baths, which are reckon'd good for the most desperate Distempers, are much more considerable Treasures; for every Year, Crowds of Valetudinarians come from the four Quarters of the World, and believe that, in the Baths of *Aix*, they find Pools almost as efficacious as that of the famous Temple, which will not be restor'd but upon the Arrival of our Deliverer.

The

The Inhabitants of this City are courteous and polite, but extremely superstitious. Formerly the reform'd *Nazarenes* were allow'd the free Exercise of their Religion: That Permission is now suppress'd, though not without a great deal of Blood shed. But at length the Papiſts got the better of their Adverſaries, and are now the ſole Maſters of the City, the publick Employments and Churches. I would have gladly ſtay'd a few Days longer here, but Buſineſs calls me to *Holland*; ſo that I cannot be preſent at a delightful Spectacle for a Philoſopher, *viz.* a famous Proceſſion, in which a gigantick Figure repreſenting *Charlemagne* is carried about, with a great many other extravagant Things which Folly has invented.

But now that I'm upon the Subject of *Nazarene* Proceſſions, I muſt make mention of one of theſe pious Perambulations which the Chevalier *de Maiſin* told me he had ſeen in *Provence*: "At *Aix* \* (*ſaid he*) the Proceſſion was begun by a Parcel of Chairmen or Peaſants, dreſs'd in long black Gowns, with a Number of little Bells tied to them, and Paſteboard Head-pieces repreſenting the Devil with long Horns. They carry a Fork, with which they tuck up the Train of a She-Devil who walks in the Center of them, with a Comb in one Hand, and a Looking-glaſs in the other. The infernal Lady being a very modeſt Dame, and not caring to have her Petticoats turn'd up, the Grimaces and Contorſions that ſhe makes to ſhew her Unwillingneſs, is Matter of Admiration and Laughter to the Populace. After theſe Devils come ſeveral Companies of ſuch like Masks, repreſenting certain Paſſages in our holy Book: For Inſtance; we ſee a *Moses* carrying the Tables of the Law, and a Rabble of *Iſraelites* adoring the

" Golden

\* Capital of *Provence*,

“ *Golden Calf*. One of the Masqueraders fires a  
 “ Pistol, at which all the idolatrous *Jews* fall  
 “ down dead. And as they who act this Come-  
 “ dy have nothing on but their Shirts and Masks,  
 “ they throw themselves into the Midst of the  
 “ Kennels; and by shewing their Backsides, fine-  
 “ ly bedawb’d with Dirt and Mud, the Spectators  
 “ are rarely diverted.

“ Among these Representations, which the Peo-  
 “ ple of *Provence* call *sacred Games*, a strapping  
 “ Porter, dress’d like a Woman, represents the  
 “ Queen of *Saba* going to visit *Solomon*: They  
 “ affect to give this Princess a very large Bum,  
 “ and her Merit depends on the Copiousness of  
 “ her Buttocks. Immediately in the Rear of her  
 “ broad A—se marches an *Italian*, to whom they  
 “ give the Name of Duke *d’Urbain*, attended by  
 “ all his Court, consisting of a Number of Pea-  
 “ sants dress’d in Men and Women’s Clothes.

“ This last Masquerade would be the most ri-  
 “ diculous of all, were it not succeeded by the  
 “ Monks marching two and two, and more ri-  
 “ diculously dress’d than all before them. The  
 “ Shrines and Busts of the canoniz’d *Nazarenes*,  
 “ follow’d by the Parliament, close the Proces-  
 “ sion; and the Presence of this venerable Body  
 “ authorizes such Fooleries.”

I could scarce believe what the Chevalier told  
 me, the Natives of *Provence* being People of Ge-  
 nius and Penetration; and surely, to give into such  
 ridiculous Nonsense, so disagreeable and shocking  
 to any Man of Sense, is to carry Folly to its ut-  
 most Period. *State Policy* (said the Chevalier)  
*authorizes all these foolish Customs. The City where*  
*this Procession is made, gets above a hundred thou-*  
*sand Crowns in three Days time, by the great Num-*  
*ber of Strangers whom Curiosity brings thither, and*  
*occasion a vast Consumption of Provisions.*

Avarice



Avarice is the Source of all these superstitious Ceremonies, and daily increases the Number. Let us, my Friend, despise them, and rejoice in the Simplicity of our Religion.

*Aix la Chapelle, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER C.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I AM at length got, my dear *Monceca*, to the Country where so many of our unfortunate Brethren have been inhumanly butcher'd and sacrific'd to the Avarice of Monks, upon the Pretence of Religion. I cross'd *Roussillon* and a Part of *Catalonia*, and am now at *Barcelona*, from whence I date this Letter. It is a large, fine, and well fortified City, but has a bad Harbour, where Ships in bad Weather are very much expos'd. The *Catalans* mortally hate the *Castilians*; and there's no Government but what they would prefer to that of *Spain*, of which they have given evident Proofs by their reiterated Rebellions: But now they are reduc'd to the small Comfort of vain Hopes. The Citadel, lately built, is such a formidable Curb, that *Barcelona* can undertake nothing, and must only trust to its Obedience and Submission.

The Burghers in all the Towns of *Catalonia* are disarm'd, and the Peasants are still more nearly watch'd: Troops are quarter'd up and down the Villages.

Villages. Such Precautions, 'tis true, are troublesome to the *Spanish* Court; but there's a Necessity for it: And, to do the *Castilians* Justice, the last Extremity only put them under a Necessity of acting with so much Rigour.

In the last Siege of this City, the Monks headed the Rebels, mounted Guard, relieved the Soldiers in the most dangerous Posts, animated them by Words and Actions, and even went in Procession with their Relicks along the Ramparts; and more than one Cannon Ball carried off both Monk and Saint. But what is most surprising, the very Nuns, notwithstanding the Weakness and Delicacy of the Sex, would have a Hand in the Rebellion; and therefore hung out Standards of Red Cloth, to shew that they breath'd nothing but Blood and Slaughter.

Consider, my dear *Monceca*, how far the Fury of Rebellion drives People when they are once spirited up to Revolt: It gives Courage to the weakest and most cowardly; and it would seem that Crimes augment Valour. So that Rebels often fight with more Obstinacy to destroy their Prince, than the loyal Subjects to defend and guard him from their Attacks. Not that the *Castilians* can be reproach'd to have acted faintly in favour of *Philip V.* This Monarch is oblig'd to love them as his Subjects, and as his Children; and indeed they have always look'd upon him as a good King, and as a Father. But in spite of all their Efforts, this Good-will would have been of no Effect, had not *France* taken up the Cudgels, and put an End to the Revolt in *Catalonia*.

The Women in this Country are not so confined as in other Parts of *Spain*, though they are much more than in *France*. They have, by Degrees, got rid of the old *Spanish* Custom of *Duegna's* and *Jalousies*, or, at least, as they have them  
now

now, they're no Restraint upon the Ladies, nor any Security to the Husbands. The great Number of *French* and *Flemings* settled at *Barcelona*, the large Body of Troops in Garrison, for most part *Walloons*, have, by Degrees, familiariz'd the old Inhabitants to Cuckoldom: Not but that it goes much against the Grain still with some of your stiff, jealous *Catalans*; but their Precaution often serves only to hasten their Misfortune.

Gallantry is become an epidemick Distemper at *Barcelona*, entirely owing to the *French*: And Woe be to them who are infected with this Distemper, which no Precaution can prevent.

Though Love extends its Prerogatives as far in *Spain* as in *France*, yet they follow very different Maxims; and though they both tend to the same End, the Roads that lead to it are, in a manner, opposite. In *France*, a Lover declares himself in the Face of the Sun, and follows his Mistress to the Play-houses and Balls: Merry-makings and Country Jaunts are so many favourable Opportunities for an amorous *Frenchman*. A *Spaniard* is discreet and reserv'd: He is under a Necessity of concealing the Sentiments of his Heart from the Publick, because his Happiness, and the Success of his Projects, depend upon Secrecy. The Churches are the most favourable Places; so that a Saint's Festival supplies the Want of an Opera or a Comedy. A Mother accompanies her Daughter, a Husband his Spouse, to the Play-houses, but the Women go by themselves to the Temple; and, under the Cloak of Piety, Love regales itself without Constraint.

All the first Assignations in *Spain* are made in the Churches: The Bargain is finally concluded there, and executed in the Houses of Females that are in Odour of Sanctity, and where young People may go without being reflected upon. There

are

are few *Spanish* Ladies but have a venerable She-Friend, cover'd all over with *Scapularies* and *Agnus Dei's*. A Husband would be look'd upon as a Fool, or, which is worse, as a Heretick, if he should take it into his Head to imagine that *Donna Mendoza*, or *Donna Valcabro*, both venerable for their Age and the Rank they held in the most Holy Fraternity of Saint *Francis* for upwards of twenty Years, were capable of favouring a Love-Affignation. These Ladies are look'd upon here as Persons already beatify'd: They keep a close Correspondence with certain Monks call'd *Corde-liers*, their Directors and Associates; and this Union is by the *Nazarenes* term'd *Spiritual Kindred*. From hence come all those Phrases and Forms of Speech that we read in the mystick Books, and which seem unintelligible; such as these, *I carry you in my Heart as a God, my dear Sister.—You are for ever present to me in Spirit, though I speak and act with other Persons.—Pray for your Brother, for your Friend, and for your Servant* \*.

Some of these Expressions are extracted from the Books of *Francis de Sales*, and from the Letters he wrote to a certain Sister call'd *de Chantal*. This *Francis de Sales* was, as I have been inform'd, a very honest Man, and had full as many Crotchets in his Brain as *Fontenelle*. All the Monks have been very glad of this Pretext, to write freely the most passionate Sentiments to their Penitents under the Veil of a mystick Language. 'Tis true, the *Spanish* Monks don't stand upon Ceremonies, finding every where open Doors; so that, under the Shelter of a Cowl, they are privileg'd Persons: And indeed for Insolence, Ignorance and Debauchery, none in any other Kingdom can compare with them. If the Children were to be born

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with

\* This last Expression is taken from Father *Girard's* Letters to la *Cadiere*.



with a Mark that pointed out their Fathers, the half of the *Spaniards* would find theirs in the Clergy and Friars.

The former in this Country are very irregular, in which they do not resemble the Clergy of *France*, whose Regularity thy Letters have so much extoll'd. To give thee a just Idea of the Churchmen in this Kingdom, thou must imagine to thyself, that the Monks are doubly wicked and ignorant to what they are in *France*, and that the secular Priests are not much better.

But what must surprise thee in a Country where the inferior Clergy are so loose and deprav'd, is, the Discretion, Probity and Candour of the *Spanish* Pontiffs, who are worthy of their Rank, and not one of them but who deserves the Esteem and Approbation of all good Men. Whatever Religion we may profess, it must be own'd that the Flock would be happy, could they but make a proper Use of the Directions of such discreet and wise Pastors. The Pontiffs are the only Persons in *Spain* who are not subject to the Inquisition. I shall hereafter give thee an Account of this monstrous Tribunal, of which I have already learn'd many Particulars that strike Horror. When the terrible Name of *Inquisitor* is mention'd in this Country, every body trembles, from the lowest to the highest of the Citizens. Notwithstanding my Passports, and the Commission I bear from the Republick of *Genoa*, I observe Circumspection, not daring to speak what I think, as in *France*.

I was no sooner on the other Side of *Belle-Garde* \*, than I affected a *Pythagorean* Silence; and this melancholy Air does well enough in a Country where every body is so reserv'd. I'm told, this Seriousness augments as we advance farther into *Spain*: If so, I expect, upon my Ar-

arrival

\* The last Place belonging to *France*.

rival at *Madrid*, to find a City of *Heracitus's*, and weeping Citizens.

But now that I mention Tears, thou must know, my dear *Monceca*, that I laugh'd very heartily at a Place where I went to weep. There's a Company of Players lately arriv'd in this City, which I was assur'd is the best that they have had in *Spain* for a long Time; particularly an Actreſs named *Galiega*, who belong'd to the royal Theatre, and had left *Madrid* upon some Discontent, was extoll'd to the Skies. I was importun'd to go and see a new Tragedy, which they told me was exceedingly fine and very moving. But I leave thee to judge of my Surprise when upon my going into the Play-house I ſaw upon the Stage two Actors, dress'd as Monks, playing the principal Parts of a Piece, intitled, *The Death of Alexis*; or, *The Example of Chastity*. I must own, that I little expected to have seen such an extravagant Scene, and often wish'd thee with me to have the Pleasure to make ourselves merry with this ridiculous Nonsense. The Subject of this Tragedy answer'd to the Character and Dignity of the Actors. *Alexis*, the Hero of the Play, is a *Roman* Gentleman, so fond of Celibacy, that he left his Wife the first Night of his Wedding, and wander'd a long Time from Town to Town, till he came at last to his Father's House, where he died in a By-corner, unknown to his Family. A Billet found in his Hand when dead discovers the whole Mystery; but all their Efforts could not get the Paper out of his Hand: Dead as he was, he would deliver it to none but the Sovereign Pontiff, who, attended by his whole Court, comes to receive the Saint's Billet; and with this pompous Ceremony the Curtain drops, and every Spectator is wrapp'd up in Admiration of the Prodigy.

*Alexis*, at the Beginning of the first Act, is but eighteen Years old, and in the fifth, from forty to forty five; by which thou'lt judge of the Unity of Place and Action. The Thoughts and Sentiments are of a Piece with the rest; so that, upon the whole, nothing more wild and absurd can be imagin'd than this famous Tragedy. I would not however seem to insinuate by this, that the *Spaniards* have no good theatrical Pieces. *Don Lopes de Vega* has made very good Comedies; but the People don't much relish them, and rather chuse to see Saint *James* or Saint *Philip*, than *Agamemnon* or *Achilles*: And the Wounds or Marks in the Flesh of Saint *Francis*, draw more Tears than the Complaints of *Andromache*, or the Despair of *Hermione*. Such is the Taste and Prejudices of this Nation: Nothing will go down but Devotion, or, rather, Superstition.

In the Middle of the Play I heard a Bell tinkle, upon which the whole Company got to their Knees and mutter'd something, the Players and two Authors that were upon the Stage being among the first. When this Ceremony was over, they all got up again, and the Play continued. Upon asking the Meaning of this Scene, I was told that it was call'd an *Angelus*, which is a sort of Prayer one would scarce think the *Nazarenes* should say in a Play-house; none but *Spaniards* are capable of such out of the way Things: And yet, after all, this Place may seem to enjoy the same Privileges as the Monasteries; for Priests receive the Money at the Door, and, under the Pretence of Charity, share in the Profits: But then the Comedians, in consideration of this Diminution of their Revenue, are not liable to Excommunication, as in *France*; nor excluded from any of the Privileges enjoy'd by other *Nazarenes*. So that  
if

if they had Money and Devotion enough, they might have a Chaplain like the royal Regiments.

*Spain* grants Burial to Comedians, *France* does not allow it, and *England* erects Monuments to their Memory. To what can we attribute this whimsical Difference? To be sure to ancient Prejudices more than to Reason, which, if it agrees to give decent Burial to Players, certainly condemns the equal Extravagancies of the *French* and *English* with regard to them; as it approves of the just Medium of the *Spaniards*, who would be happy were all their Actions to be directed by the same solid Reason and good Sense.

Farewel, my dear *Monceca*; may thou be ever prosperous and happy.

*Barcelona*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER CI.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I AM now in a Country, my dear *Brito*, where Men are as free as they are Slaves in that Part of the World which thou inhabitest. *Holland* (says a *French* Author) is the native Soil of Philosophers, where they may freely exercise their Reason, without feeling the Yoke imposed upon it elsewhere. Good Sense seems to be entail'd upon the *Dutch*; and whoever examines them carefully will, I suppose, readily allow, that though Nature has denied them the *French* Politeness, the *English* Penetration, and



the *Italian* Vivacity, she has fully made up the Loss of those Qualities by good Sense, Candour and Foresight, which shine in all their Actions.

The *Dutch*, born free, give Obedience only to the Laws of their Country, and have no other Sovereigns but Virtue and the Ties of Duty. Thou must not however imagine that this Character is applicable to all the *Dutch* in general: It is here as in other Places, a Mixture of Good and Bad; and the common People in *Holland* are as despicable as the Burghers, and even the Artisans, are commendable.

It will be almost impossible to give thee a just Idea of the Manners of this People, without entering into Particulars. Thou perceivest already, that in characterizing the Commonalty, neither the Burghers nor the principal Men of the Republick are included. The Nobility that subsist as yet in this Country, have Manners and Customs very different from the Burghers, and therefore I shall do my best to inform thee of whatever I think worthy of Remark in the different States that compose the Republick.

*Holland* is an unfruitful Country, and may be called a floating Land, or a Meadow laid under Water for three Quarters of the Year; and were the whole in Corn, it would not maintain a fifth Part of the Inhabitants.

Commerce is the only Thing the *Dutch* have to depend on. They've spar'd no Pains nor Trouble to make it flourish in their own Country, and have extended it to the remotest Parts of the World.

Necessity and the Oppression of the *Spaniards* have forced this People to go to the *Indies*, and form a second Republick there. When they had shaken off the Yoke of their ancient Master, *Spain* resolv'd to prohibit them from trading to her Ports, hoping by that Means to distress them, and so bring  
about

about their Reduction. But it turn'd out quite different to their Expectations ; for the *Dutch*, finding these Difficulties, resolv'd to go to the Fountain of Commerce, and accordingly went to the *Indies*, where they laid the Foundation of the now powerful Colonies. An *Italian* Author, who cannot be supposed to favour the *Dutch*, or that he is much inclined to publish their Grandeur, is positive, that the City of *Amsterdam*, alone, has more Shipping than all the rest of *Europe* \*.

The *Dutch* met with great Obstacles, with respect to their Settlements in the *East-Indies*, from the *Portuguese*, then subjected to *Spain*, who used all Endeavours to make them miscarry in their Attempts ; but they not only surmounted these Difficulties, but conquered their Enemies, and drove them from several Islands of which they were the Masters. From these Victories, and successful Beginnings, their Hopes were so far rais'd that they began to form Schemes of extending their Commerce to the *West-Indies*.

The Liberty enjoy'd by the *Dutch* contributed much to the Success of their Undertakings. The good Reception and Protection which Strangers, persecuted in their own Countries for the Sake of Religion, have met with from them, have drawn such Numbers to their Country, that they have been able to form powerful Colonies, to fit out a prodigious Number of Ships, and yet their own Country to remain extremely populous.

Had *Spain* continued to be the Mistress of *Holland*, *Amsterdam* would now perhaps be like *Antwerp*. Its Grandeur would only consist in its Extent, and in nothing remarkable but its Situation ; whereas now, in this opulent and magnificent City,

\* *La Quantita di Vascelli, a commun Judicio, viene stimata si grande, che par eggia quella che fa into il reste dell' Europa.*

City, every thing resembles the ancient Grandeur of the *Tyrians* and *Phœnicians*, so pompously describ'd by the *Greeks* and *Romans*. The Port of *Amsterdam* is the most surprising Thing that I ever met with in all my Travels. 'Tis impossible, without having seen it, to represent to one's self the noble Appearance of two thousand Ships lying in the same Harbour. Let us imagine a magnificent City built in the Midst of Waves; 'tis nothing comparable to the beautiful Prospect of such a Number of Ships from all Nations, with their Masts, Flags and Streamers, which make a Shew surprising and inimitable.

Since my Arrival at *Amsterdam*, I have only taken a general View of its Beauties, without descending to Particulars; but shall take care to inform thee fully of every thing I see.

All Religions are profess'd in this City, Men being allow'd to adore the Divinity in their own Way. Nevertheless, though every body may serve God here in the Manner that he thinks best, the Religion of the State, or the *United Provinces*, is what they call the *Reform'd* or *Protestant Religion*; which thou knowest to be, in the main, the same as the *Nazarene*, and only different in certain Points.

The Papist *Nazarenes* boldly damn the Protestants. These charitably allow their Adversaries Admittance into some obscure Corner of Heaven; but tell us withal there are so many Rubs in their Way thither, that, frankly speaking, they might as well send them directly to *Old Nick*. These two different Religions, or, rather, different Opinions, (since in the main they agree in the most of Facts) have been the Occasion of much ill Blood among their Adherents; and a Time has been when the *Nazarenes* cut one another's Throats, and thought they gain'd Heaven by so doing, if it was  
in

in Defence of the Opinions of a *German* Monk \* and a *French* Clergyman †, two learned Men, even by the Confession of their Enemies. I'm positive that when they introduced their new Opinions, they had no Notion that such Divisions would have ensued upon them; and were they to return to Life again, I very much doubt if they could engage the World into such Wars upon any such Account. However good their Opinions were, People might well believe them, but not force them upon others with Fire and Sword. The *Nazarenes*, particularly the Protestants, are no longer such Fools as to murder one another for Arguments and Syllogisms; so see we that they grant Liberty of Conscience to all that live in their Country.

The Reform'd Religion is, 'tis true, the establish'd Religion in *Holland*, but it tyrannizes not over the others. Not but that, without the Wisdom and Prudence of the Government, such a Thing might very readily happen; for 'tis here as elsewhere: And among the Reform'd there are Bigots who, in Imitation of the Jesuites, would, *for the greater Glory of God*, plague and torment a *Nazarene* Papist with great Pleasure and Satisfaction. But the Magistrates, Men of Honour, and far from being Zealots, will by no means suffer Oppressions which, in the Event, might become hurtful to the State: So that the *Nazarene* Papists meet with so much Lenity from the Government, that 'tis assur'd their Number equals, if not surpasses, that of the Protestants.

The just Limits which the Wisdom of the *Dutch* has prescrib'd to the Clergy's Ambition, are a Bulwark to the other Religions that differ from the establish'd one; and it would be dangerous for the Ministers of this Republick to foment a pious Zeal  
in

\* *Luther.* † *Calvin.*



in their Flocks against such whom they term *Hereticks* or *Non-Conformists*. Upon the least Transgression this Way, they would be ordered *to pray to God, and to meddle with no Controversy*; and should they disobey the first Order, the second would be attended with a Punishment upon their Pockets: For as they have no Revenue but what is granted by the State, the Moment they disobey, the Allowance is withdrawn, and they, with their Wives and Children, left to shift for themselves the best way they can.

In the Reform'd Religion the Clergy marry. 'Twas thought necessary to allow them Wives, for fear they should follow the Example of the *Nazarene* Monks, and make free with those of their Neighbours: And indeed it must be own'd, that their Manners, in general, come up to what was practis'd in the Golden Age. I should not be surpris'd to hear that a *Minister* (so the Protestants term their Priests) had made a Mistake; he's a Man, and, as such, liable to human Frailty: But, hitherto, nothing could be laid to their Charge that is shocking to Decency.

The Author of the *Reformation* \* has, in my Opinion, done a very considerable Disservice to the Clergy who adher'd to his Opinions, namely, by allowing them to take Wives, and clipping their Benefices; which may not improperly be call'd, *burning the Candle at both Ends*.

The *Dutch* Protestants acknowledge no Sovereign nor Subaltern Pontiffs. All their Priests are upon an equal Footing, and never had the flattering Titles of, *my Lord, your Excellence, or your Eminence*: For which Reason, they never fail to honour the Churches, where some of the Clergy are vested with pompous Titles, and enjoy large Revenues, with the Character of, *Babylonish Whore*.  
But

\* Calvin.

But in this they, perhaps, condemn what they have no inward Dislike to; and the Point, I dare say, upon which they would the most readily agree with their Adversaries, would be that which should permit them to possess large Benefices, and to be honoured with Titles as well as the *Nazarene* Pontiffs.

If the Ministers are not rich, they are however learned. Before their Reception they must undergo a strict Examination; whereas in almost all the Orders, the *Nazarene* Monks are a Parcel of beggarly, idle Fellows. The Ecclesiasticks among the Reformed are advanced to that Dignity by their Merit and Learning. The meanest Country Pastor not only knows his Religion, but sometimes even those Things that form great Men; of whom several have been furnish'd out of the Body of Ministers. They mortally hate the Jesuites, who are nothing behind hand with them; and I think they are both in the right. Without the Ministers all *Europe* would be Papists, and without Jesuites all would be Protestants. Though they are so furiously animated against one another, yet I make no doubt, but from the Bottom of their Hearts they render one another Justice, and agree, that their Adversaries have both Learning and Merit; at least the famous *Claude* and the illustrious *Arnauld* thought so. I have however met with *Jansenists* in *France* who told me very confidently, that the Jesuites were but Ignorants: Their Animosity and Blindness almost carry them to deny that they understand Politicks; and yet it must be confess'd, that this Order is learn'd, and has produc'd great Men. The *Benedictines*, who have had among them many First-rate Men of Learning, are as little fond of the Jesuites as the Protestants are; nevertheless they acknowledge that their Adversaries have had Authors worthy of universal Esteem.

Esteem, were there no more than the *Sirmondus's* and the *Petavius's*.

In this Conflict between the *Nazarene* Doctors, whether *Papists*, *Jansenists* or *Protestants*, &c. I would have a Man of Sense only to regard what is good in their Writings, and not trouble himself what an Author's Opinion was about *Grace* or *Predestination*, when there are many other excellent Things in his Works. What is it to me, when I read *Daniel's* History of *France*, whether that Historian was a Jesuit or a Rabbi, if I can but reap some Benefit by his Work? I shall be as ready to praise him according to his Merit, as I would be to condemn a *Jew* who was a bad Historian. The Learned, in the Commerce of civil Life, are of all Sorts of Religions; and 'tis a most ridiculous Weakness not to do Justice to the Merit of a Man, because he worships God in a different Manner from us: Such extravagant Folly is only proper for the *Italian* Prelates and Monks.

There's no Country where People of different Religions live more socially than in *Holland*, where *Jews*, *Nazarenes* and *Mahometans* deal with one another like Brethren, and look upon each other as Men and Children of the same Omnipotent Being. Happy Country! where Men respect those of their own Species, and have no Notion of imposing Opinions upon any Man which he can neither believe nor comprehend.

Farewel, my dear Friend; live content and happy, and let me hear from thee. *Moses Rodrigo*, who is very useful to me in this Country, lays his Commands on me to offer thee his Compliments.

*Amsterdam*, \*\*\*\*\*.

LETTER



## LETTER CII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

'TIS beyond Expression, my dear *Monceca*, how much I am surpris'd at the Manners and Customs of the *Spaniards*; their Singularity appears daily more and more: And I have had an Opportunity, in two Months that I have been in *Spain*, to make more Reflections upon the Pride and Ignorance of Men, than during a whole Year that I remain'd in *Italy*.

The Road from *Barcelona* to *Madrid* is the most frequented in the whole Kingdom, and yet a Traveller can find no Entertainment in several Parts; for Inns, after the *French* or *Italian* Manner, we meet with nothing but wretched *Ventas* \*, which are huge ruinous Houses, with some old rotten Bedsteads in the Garrets. A Traveller fatigu'd with his Journey, when he sets up at one of those delicious Quarters, if he inclines to eat, must send to buy Bread at the Baker's, and Meat at the Butcher's; and if he has no Servant, why truly he must take the Trouble to go and fetch himself what he wants for Supper: For you must know, that the Landlord of the *Ventas* would not stir off his Chair for the best Prince in Christendom; and would think himself dishonour'd for ever should he move one Step more than usual, or what is incumbent upon a Man of his Station and Rank. In the

VOL. II.

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TOWNS

\* Blind Tippling-houses.



Towns of any Consequence, there are none, 'tis true, of these *Ventas*; but the Taverns, if they may be so call'd, are much of a Piece with those blessed *Ventas*.

Nothing but Necessity ought to induce a Man to travel in *Spain*: Should he do it out of Curiosity, he must be a Simpleton, unless it were for picking up Memoirs to make up a History of human Weakness and Folly. In this Case he could do no better; for every where he'd find——

*Orgueil, astuce, Pauvreté*  
*Ignorance & Bigoterie*  
*Superstition, Vanité,*  
*Ridicule Ceremonie.*

i. e.

At ev'ry Step he'd plainly see  
 Low Cunning, Pride and Poverty;  
 A Nation to the Priests meer Tools,  
 And vain, fantastick, formal Fools.

These four Lines sum up the Character of the *Spanish* Nation: And though 'tis reported by several People in foreign Countries, that the modern Dons are very different from the old Natives; yet (abstracting from the Grandees and Courtiers, whom Ambition, and to insinuate themselves into the good Graces of the present King, have induc'd to affect different Manners from what they formerly had) the Populace, Burghers and inferior Gentry, are still the *Spaniards*, whose Rhodomontades often divert all *Europe*, and whose Poverty and Nastiness go beyond their Vanity.

It is scarce credible to what Lengths the People here carry their Pride; and thou would'st be surpris'd to see Crowds of Labourers, upon Holy-days,

days, strutting up and down dress'd in black Silk, and long Swords by their Sides, and *Donning* one another with great Ceremony as they meet; and yet these poor, proud Creatures have not often, for a whole Week, a Morsel of Bread to put in their Mouths. When a Peasant meets another in the Field, he salutes him very solemnly with an *Adio Señor Cavallero* \*; the other makes a suitable Answer with great Gravity: And were two potent Monarchs to have an Interview on the Frontiers of their respective Dominions, there would not be half so much Formality and Ceremony as between those Wooden-shoe *Dons*.

Formerly the Populace were not only proud, but also insolent to the Grandees, and even to their Sovereigns: But under the present King there's a thorough Change; and he has reduc'd them so, as not to be afraid of their Commotions. In the Reign of his Predecessor *Charles II.* the Shoemakers of *Madrid* were so formidable a Body, that when they mutiny'd the Court was forced to grant their Demands. In 1676 a Regulation having been made with respect to the Price of Shoes, they presented a Petition to the President of the Council of *Castile*, demanding that Things might be put upon the old Footing; but, as he did not comply so quickly as they thought he ought to have done, they all ran with their Lasts and Stirrups under *Charles's* Windows, and cried as loud as they could, *Viva el Rei, y muera el mal Gobierno*: i. e. *Let the King live, but let the wicked Minister perish*. His Majesty, surpris'd at this extraordinary Musick, went to the Windows, and was not a little astonish'd to see the Worshipful Body of Shoemakers. He sent for the President of *Castile* who, to put a Stop to so disagreeable a Concert,

H h 2

gave

\* This Expression may be render'd, *Adieu Sir Cavaleer*.

gave the Mutineers Leave to sell their Shoes as dear and of as bad Leather as they pleas'd.

What did not a little contribute to the insolent Behaviour of the Shoemakers was, the Indulgence shew'd some Days before to the Masons, who assembled in one of the remote Quarters of the City, and resolved to attack in a hostile Manner some of the Magistrates who did not their Duty to their Satisfaction, and whom they accused of Blunders and Projects to ruin the Poor. The Intentions of these new Reformers were to sacrifice the pretended Criminals in the Face of the Sun, to serve as an Example to others. By good Luck not one of the Seditious had Courage to put himself at their Heads; so that the Affair came to no Head, every one returning to his Work, and the Magistrates continued their Oppressions. The tumultuous Rising of the Shoemakers was a Consequence of the Masons escaping without Punishment. 'Tis true, that the bad Administration in the last Reign occasioned frequent Rebellions: The Duke of *Medina-Cæli*, who had the Management of publick Affairs, was of a lazy, indolent Temper; every one robb'd and plunder'd as they pleas'd, and the King's Coffers were always empty.

The Misery and Poverty of the common People were, nevertheless, partly owing to their own, and to most of the Burghers, Laziness: And to this very Day the Exportation of a great Quantity of Money may be attributed to the same Cause. Whatever Riches the Flota brings yearly into *Spain*, they cannot compensate for the Mischief arising in a State from the Sloth and ridiculous Vanity of many of the Subjects; besides, out of the immense Sums brought from the *Indies*, almost two thirds go to Foreigners for the Goods which they have furnish'd.

What

What contributes not a little to the Penury of Money in *Spain* is, their taking into their Service great Numbers of *French* and *Flemings*, who do Things that the *Don Diego's*, the *Don Sancho's*, and the *Don Rodrigo's*, would think a Scandal upon themselves and their Posterity; and, rather than put their Hands to such mean, slavish Work, would a thousand Times sooner chuse to starve with Hunger: So that these Foreigners, neither so lazy, nor so vain, are employ'd in their Tillage, in their Buildings, and in the most servile Drudgery; and when they have scraped together a few Pistoles, they take Leave of the *Sancho's* and *Diego's*, and go back to their own Countries with the Cash, leaving their Masters with their dear Pride, and not a Sous in their Pockets. The Number of Strangers that go to *Spain* for Work is so considerable, that a *French* Author affirms *they amount to eighty thousand, who go and come in this Manner*; and that there's not one of them but carries away every Year seven or eight Pistoles, and sometimes more, which is an immense Sum in the whole. 'Tis true, that since *Philip V.* mounted the Throne, the great Number of *French* who have settled in *Spain*, have contributed much to re-people it, thereby diminishing the Demand for the travelling Domesticks and Peasants, and furnishing the *Dons Garcia's*, *Pedro's*, &c. with fix'd Servants.

One Reason of the Neglect of cultivating the Lands in *Spain* (which are mostly fallow, or but very indifferently manur'd) is, the great Number of Monks with which this Country abounds more than any other: 'Tis here they may be said to be in their strong Hold. The Priests for many Years have been in Possession of a Right to sacrifice all who displease them, under the Pretence of their being accused of *Judaism*, Sorcery, Blasphemy, or other Crimes, competent to the Tribunal of the



Inquisition. Whoever declines to fall down before the *Monkish Idol*, is deliver'd over into the Hands of the Hangman. But this is not the proper Place to mention the Cruelties of the Inquisition; in some other Letter thou shalt have all the Horrors that I have heard of it. What is most surprising is, that though the *Spaniards* were without this barbarous Inquisition, they would be no less submissive to the Monks, for whom they have a ridiculous Veneration born, as it were, with them. They are promoted to all the eminent Posts in spite of all Opposition from the present Ministry, who are very sensible how prejudicial this Custom is; but the Evil is so rooted, that it is incurable.

The Duke of *Medina-Cæli* was never so much pinch'd in any Affair during his Ministry, as with that of changing the King's Confessor: No sooner was one plac'd than the Duke was oblig'd to remove him. So that in the Space of five Years his Majesty had seven, and not one of them but what was factious and turbulent, breeding Confusion in the State.

The Respect which the *Spaniards* bear to the Monks is so great, so blind, that it makes them vindicate the most unparallel'd Crimes; nay, they even punish those who would pretend to put a Stop to them, by striking at the Monastick Privileges. The most elevated Rank was no Shelter to those who dared to make the Attempt.

A Monk of the Kingdom of *Valencia*, a Country abounding with Robbers, Murderers and Assassins, after he had fled from his Convent, put himself at the Head of a Gang of Thieves call'd *Bandeleros*, and distinguished himself by several wicked Actions; but being taken, in hot Blood, after an Assassination, all the School-Divinity could not furnish him with Arguments to palliate his Crime.

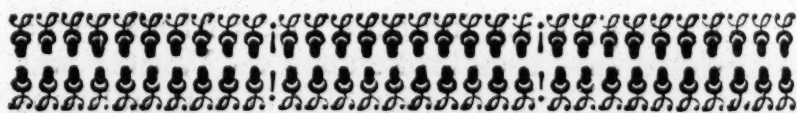
Crime. A Person of Understanding, who thought it was necessary to make an Example of him, advised the Vice-Roy to have him hang'd up directly, which he had a good Mind to do; but, being apprehensive of the Monachal Power, he call'd an Assembly of four Friars, and order'd them to give their Opinion. Two of them quoted all the *Spanish* Doctors, and pretended that the Monk could not be judg'd till the Pontiff was inform'd of his Affair: The two others, by a sort of Miracle, forgetting the venerable Livery of Saint *Francis* which they had the Honour to wear, and being seiz'd with Horror at the Murder which their Brother had committed, voted for his Execution with all possible Diligence. In this Conflict of Opinions the Vice-Roy, judging that his Majesty's Service requir'd a speedy and severe Example, took the Resolution which he thought most conformable to Justice, and pronounc'd Sentence against the Criminal without further Ceremony.

The Clergy being inform'd that a Monk (who deserv'd to have been broke upon the Wheel) was going to be punish'd, assembled in a tumultuous Manner, and ran to the Pontiff, who, agreeing with them in Opinion, sent to desire the Vice-Roy to proceed no further; but he, for this Bout, made free with his filial Obedience, not hesitating a Minute, but ordering the Execution with all Expedition: But it was scarce over when the Pontiff publish'd an Interdiction, at which dismal News the People thought themselves undone, and, with Fury, laid Siege to the Vice-Roy's Palace, thundering out; — *Governador disgraciado, quieres que nos hagamos Negros como Carbon, y secos como Lena? Crees que saremos escomulgados por amor tuyo? Es menester que eres judio, O Moro, por haver hecho un Pecado por el qual el ciel te amenaza. i. e. Unhappy Governor! thou'rt resolved then that we shall become*  
black

*black as Coal, and dry as a Stick. Doest thou imagine, that for thy dear Sake we will be excommunicated? Thou must be either a Jew or a Moor, to have committed a Crime which will draw down the Wrath of Heaven upon thy guilty Head.* The Vice-Roy did not think proper to parley with a Mob, who were furnish'd with such strong Arguments, but wisely made his Escape out of the Town. The Court being inform'd of this Affair, appointed a *Jesuit* and a *Dominican* to enquire into it; and, I dare say, thou'lt guess before hand that the Vice-Roy was to be put in the wrong: So indeed it happen'd; for he was turn'd out of his Post, and banish'd twenty Leagues from *Madrid*, for having punish'd a murdering Villain.

Adieu, my Friend; may thou be ever happy and content.

*Madrid, \*\*\*\*\*.*



### LETTER CIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE Air of *Holland*, my dear *Isaac*, seems to inspire the Love of Philosophy. That Liberty enjoy'd in it furnishes the Mind with a thousand Ideas which present themselves no where else. Every Man in this Country has a Right to think, to argue, and to explain himself, without risking the Loss of his Fortune or Life. Every one may serve God in his own Way; and, if he be but regular and discreet in his Behaviour, nothing can disturb his Quiet in this happy Country.

The

The Liberty of Religion occasions no manner of Confusion. As there is none that can pretend to tyrannize over others, all is peaceable, and every one indulges his own Opinion; and whatever Diversity there may be of Sentiments among the *Dutch*, they all agree in this Point, *Let us neither force others, nor be forc'd ourselves.*

This happy People are truly humane, and sway'd by the first Principles of the Law of Nature. They have no Notion that the Difference of Sentiments ought to be the Occasion of Violence and Persecution. They leave to Heaven the enlightening of the Mind, and never make Religion a Cloak for Things that would make Humanity blush; nor ever harbour a Desire of extending their Religion, by any wicked Plots or Contrivances against their Brethren who have a different way of Thinking. Is a Man the less so for being a *Persian* or an *Indian*? If he's virtuous, why banish him from Society? A *Turk*, a *Bonze*, if you will, thoroughly honest, is every where an inestimable Treasure; and is to be respected by his Fellow-creatures at *Amsterdam*, as at *Constantinople* or *Pekin*.

These Maxims are so ingrafted, if I may use the Expression, in the *Dutch*, that there are few who have been persecuted for the Sake of Religion, but find among them not only a Retreat, but real Protection. 'Tis reasonable to think, that the Conformity of Religion has excited their Charity towards the *French Refugees*: My private Opinion corresponds with this. But the Hatred which they bear to Violence, was enough to determine them to assist the *Portuguese Jews* against the Persecution of their Tyrants. The United Provinces have open'd their Doors to our unfortunate proscrib'd Brethren, and skreen'd them from the Rage of the Monks: And there are many *Nazarene* Papists who are under infinite Obligations to the  
*Dutch,*



*Dutch*; many famous Authors, People of the first Rank, who, obliged to abandon their native Country, have experienced the Compassion of the *Dutch*.

'Tis not in this Country as in many others, where our unhappy Nation seems only tolerated as a Prey to all the Injuries and Rigours of Fortune. A *Jew* at *Amsterdam* is a Citizen who enjoys all the Privileges to which the other Religions are intitled. The Cousin of the *Roman* Pontiff, the Brother of the first *Lutheran* Baron, and the Son of an *English* Bishop, have no greater Privileges in *Holland* than the Child of the meanest Rabbi. When a Man has the Happiness of being born a Subject of the Republick, he enjoys all the Privileges: He's under Subjection to none, and owns not even the Magistrate, but when he is in the Exercise of his Office; every where else all are upon a Level.

It may therefore be justly said, that the *Jews* are free in *Holland* and *England*, but Slaves every where else. 'Tis true, we are tolerated at *Rome*, and have several Synagogues there; but what Constraints are we not laid under? With what Cruelties, Contempt and Labours, are we not obliged to purchase the Retreat which they grant us? Several of our Brethren have assured me, that, by an Ordinance from the *Roman* Pontiff \*, a certain Number of *Jews* were obliged every *Saturday's* Afternoon to be present at a *Nazarene* Sermon, where a Parcel of Friars walk up and down with Rods in their Hands, and when a *Jew* is not attentive, he is treated as a School-boy, with two or three Strokes upon the Shoulders; and sometimes the Monks, being shrewd, peep into their Ears, for fear they should stop them with Cotton.

To what Purpose all these Momeries, or rather Indignities? Are the *Nazarenes* such Simpletons,

as

\* Gregory XII.

as to imagine that the Mind is to be convinced by vain Declamations? To pave the Way to Reason, the Heart must be touch'd. Were it true, as it is not, that their Religion was the best, the harsh, violent and tyrannical Manner with which they declare their Opinions, would hinder us from embracing them, and prejudice us against a Religion which acts with absolute Power, and forces rather than persuades.

The *Hollanders*, my dear *Isaac*, have no Notion of making People give Attention to the Sermons of their Preachers by Rods of Correction, or even to give Attendance in the Churches: They follow the Opinions which they think most reasonable, and are as little concern'd with the Religion of their Neighbours as with their domestick Affairs, into which they never pry.

A Man in this Country is a Sovereign in his own House, and his Orders absolute. He's under no Apprehension of being call'd to an Account of what he does, or that any body will make the least Enquiry, unless he lies under a Suspicion of acting against the Government, or the Good of Society.

From that universal Liberty, with which the *Dutch* are bless'd, springs the Love to their Country. Every Individual eyes it as a tender Mother, whose Privileges are to be carefully preserv'd; and these Sentiments are so deeply imprinted in their Minds, that nothing can efface them. As there are but few Monks in *Holland*, and those few without any Authority, 'tis highly probable that the Tranquillity of the Republick will be lasting. The Difference of Religion here is not to be dreaded; for the *Dutch* are too sensible and wise to disturb the State for the Sake of some Churchmens Opinions in religious Disputes. They suffer them to publish as many Books as they please, and read  
them

them when they are instructive or diverting; and when they're good for little, leave them to rot in the Booksellers Shops.

From the Privilege which the Learn'd have of disputing at Pleasure, proceeds the Variety of Religions; all, in the Main, *Nazarenes*, but different in certain Articles. Perhaps thou won't be displeas'd to have a little Sketch of the controverted Points of these differing Sects.

One of the most considerable is that of the *Arminians*, which took its Name from *Arminius*, Professor of Theology at *Leyden*; and differs only from the *Calvinists* in the Articles of *Grace* and *Predestination*.

The *Anti-Trinitarians*, or modern *Arians*, have reviv'd the Opinions of that famous *Arius*, who, in *Constantine's* Time, made so much Noise among the *Nazarene* Pontiffs. His Opinions, after two hundred Years of Triumph, and thirteen hundred Years of Oblivion, are again come upon the Stage, and have been maintain'd in our Days by very eminent Men, particularly in *England*. Doctor *Clarke*, a learn'd *Englisbman*, has publish'd several Works in Defence of the Validity and Truth of this Doctrine: And the illustrious *Newton* is thought to have died an *Arian*. Were I a *Nazarene*, I should be at a Loss to conceive how it was possible that, during thirteen Centuries, none should discover the Truth.

The Sect of the *Quakers* is one of the most singular and extraordinary, having neither Priests nor Worship; nor are they baptiz'd as the *Nazarenes*, or circumcis'd as the *Jews* and *Turks*: All their religious Ceremonies, at a Meeting of the Friends, consist in hearing a Sermon from him or her whom the Spirit first moves to hold forth. The Women are very careful to hide their Faces with their Fans, and the Men are cover'd with broad-brimm'd Hats, which

which give them an Air extremely serious and dull. I look upon the *Quakers* to be the only true Philosophers among the *Nazarenes*: They never give any body the Title of *Sir*, much less *Your Highness*, or *Your Majesty*, &c. which they pretend are nothing but the Invention of human Pride: And to call Earth-worms *Your Eminence*, *Your Holiness*, *Your Excellency*, is, in their way of Thinking, the most ridiculous Thing that the Folly of Man can devise. And therefore to shun all such Appellations, they *Thee* and *Thou* even Princes and Kings; and give for Reasons, that a great Man is but a single Person, to whom *Thou* is more proper, according to *Grammar*, than *You*, accompanied with some superfluous Terms, the Invention of Pride, and which his Merit gives him no Title to. They dress in a very plain Manner, having neither Plaits nor Buttons according to the Fashion: And this Singularity is affected to put them constantly in mind, that, as they are more decent in their Apparel than others, so they ought in every other Case to be more sober and virtuous. They look upon Oaths to be a horrid Prostitution of God's Name in the Debates of wretched Mortals; and are positive, that a virtuous Man ought not to give any other Affirmation but *Yea* or *Nay*.

I confess, my dear *Isaac*, that this Custom of the *Quakers* highly pleases me: Oaths are vain and superfluous. A Rogue does not stick at Perjury; and a Man of Honour ought to be believed upon his Word. I remember a beautiful Passage of a Tragic Author, very *a propos* to what I'm now upon, which thou hast not perhaps seen.— Here it is.

---

*Laisse-là les Sermons.*

*S'ils faisoient dans les Coeurs naître les Sentimens,*  
VOL. II. I i *Je*



*Je t'en demanderois. Mais, quelle est leur Puissance?*

*Le Vice les trahit, le vertu s'en offense.*

*Il suffit, entre nous, de ton devoir, du mien*

*Voila le vray Serment : Les autres ne Sont rien \*.*

Thus paraphras'd :

---

No more of Oaths.  
Could they strike Terror on the harden'd Heart,  
And rouze up Conscience to direct the Tongue,  
Then might'st thou swear : But since they have  
no Pow'r

With Villains practis'd in the perjur'd Path,  
Nor are of Use with Men of honest Hearts ;  
Think no more of them, but as usefess Things.  
To thee and me let Duty be the Tie,  
The sacred Oath that binds the honest Soul ;  
All else is nought but vain and empty Sounds.

The last Virtue of the *Quakers* is never to go to War, and not to shed Blood upon any Pretext whatever. They look upon the Glory of Conquerors as the Fury of a Madman : They grieve at Murders committed by other Men, to which they ascribe the Epithets of *Courage, Grandeur of Soul, Magnanimity, or Love of their Country* ; adding, that if all Men were *Quakers*, satisfied with what they possess, and ready to bestow on the Misfortunate what they can spare, they would have no Notion of tearing, like famish'd Wolves, People to Pieces whom they never saw before, and who, very probably, never did them Harm.

The Sect of *Anabaptists*, or rather *Mennonites*, so call'd from a *Friezland* Priest named *Menno*, is pretty much the same with that of the *Quakers*, the shaking excepted that the latter affect upon the

first

\* *Houdart de la Motte* in the Tragedy of *Romulus*, Act V. Scene I.

first Motions of the pretended holy Spirit within them; and Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which the *Mennonites* administer to People arriv'd at the Years of Discretion, and which the *Quakers* reject.

The *Rhinsburgians* take their Name from the Village of *Rhinsburg* near *Leyden*, where they have a yearly Meeting the Day after *Pentecost*. They were originally *Arminians*, and have adopted several Opinions of the *Arians*, *Quakers*, *Anabaptists*, &c. and their Religion is a Medley of the Opinions of all the *Nazarene* Sects.

The *Hebraists* are a Sort of *Nazarene Jews*, who look upon the perfect Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Language as an Article of Faith. This Sect stands mostly by the Female Sex, and when they meet they chime it away in a hideous rather than a devout Manner.

In all these different Religions there are a few honest, well meaning People, who believe that their Manner of Worship, which they perform with Zeal and Fervency, is the most agreeable to the Divine Being. Think'st thou that they will be at last thrown into utter Darkeness, because they do not spring from the Race of *Jacob*? Or will it be of no Advantage to them to have followed the Light of Nature and Conscience, the first that Men practis'd? Though they have acknowledg'd but one God, and have done all the Good they could to their Neighbour in this World, must they be eternally miserable in the next? And because they have not thought it necessary to Salvation to be a *Jew*, though they have been virtuous, is it to be imagin'd that the Divine Being, infinitely good, can resolve to punish them? This is indeed advanced by our Rabbies; and they tell us, that 'tis a Mystery which passeth our Comprehension: But must implicit Faith be given to them?

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*; let us rejoice in being born *Jews*, but not slightly condemn others.

*Amsterdam, \*\*\*\*\*.*



## LETTER CIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE Variety of Sects in *Holland* has led me into deep Reflections upon the Force of Prejudice. I have seriously consider'd how difficult it is for Men to know the Errors of the Religion in which they have been bred, however visible they may be to Persons of another Persuasion.

The Notion, which the Generality of Men imbibe in their Youth of what they call fundamental Articles of Faith, is so strong, that they readily admit of Opinions directly opposite to one another, and equally ridiculous, without being sensible of this surprising Contradiction. *Our Mind, like our Eyes, (says Cicero) is so accusom'd to the Objects which daily present themselves to it, that it is neither surpris'd at what it sees, nor solicitous to penetrate into the Causes* \*. Men observe the same Conduct with regard to their Religion. In their tender Years they are train'd up in the Belief of certain Opinions, which, however extraordinary they may appear to them when further advanced in Years, they are not in the least concern'd about the

\* *Consuetudine oculorum affuescunt animi; neque admirantur, neque requirunt, rationes earum rerum quas semper vident.*

*Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. Cap. XXXVIII.*

the Matter; which proceeds from a settled Custom of looking upon them as fundamental Principles: And thus, by Degrees, they come to believe implicitly Things contradictory to the Light of Nature and common Sense. If accidentally any Doubt should arise in their Minds, they are so far from endeavouring to clear it up, that they rather study for Reasons to fortify their Prejudices.

What perpetuates Errors in the Generality of Mankind is, the firm Belief they have in certain false Opinions, which they look upon as Principles so certain, that they think it quite needless to examine them, nay, even would believe it a heinous Crime to have the least Doubt about them; and therefore most of the Opinions that flow from those false Principles, must necessarily be tainted with the Impurity of their Source. A Fanatick who takes it for granted that he, or his Teacher, is immediately inspir'd, readily admits the Chimera's of a heated Imagination as Divine Revelations, and draws Conclusions that are apparently just. *I am inspir'd, (says he) and the Spirit, by which I am influenced, being God himself, cannot deceive me; and therefore what is thus communicated to me must be true.* To attempt to reason him out of his pretended Inspiration, is lost Labour; for he constantly retreats to his Argument: And if one should attack the Principle upon which his Opinion is founded, he immediately drops the Dispute, and looks upon his Adversary as a Man capable of denying that two and two make four, and of refusing to submit to the strongest Evidence.

The Prejudices under which the Generality of Mankind labour, with respect to the mistaken Principles which they have imbib'd, shut fast their Ears against the most convincing Arguments urged



ged against them; and therefore 'tis not at all surprising to find such Obstinacy in the different Sects. There are but few of such a superior Genius as to be able to shake off the Impressions of Youth which Time has fortified, or that dare to carry the Light of Truth in the Midst of a Multitude of Errors, which they have been accusom'd to look upon as sacred. The most absurd Religions have been profess'd by the greatest Men. Could the Mind of Man invent any thing so extravagant as Idolatry? And yet how many of your First-rate Genius's have been plung'd in the Horror and Folly of Paganism? Had they but reflect-ed ever so little upon the first Principles of their Religion, they must have soon discover'd the weak Side; but, as they were accusom'd from their Infancy to look upon them as Truths generally receiv'd, the Absurdities flowing from them were no wise shocking.

I'm not ignorant, my dear *Isaac*, that many learn'd Men of this Age maintain, that none of the great Men of Antiquity believ'd the Plurality of Gods: But what Testimonies can they adduce to prove Conjectures which so evidently clash with the Writings that still subsist, and explain the Sentiments of their Authors? *Cicero*, who is commonly quoted as one of the Pagan Philosophers, the most firmly persuaded of the Existence of a Divine Being, uses the Argument of innate Ideas, and of general Approbation, to prove the Plurality of Gods. *As no Law nor Custom, (says he) has manifested to Mankind the Existence of the Gods, this Idea must, as it were, be innate with them: Nay, even the Existence of those Gods must be real; because a Thing universally received by all People must, of Necessity, be true* \*.

Is

\* Cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege, sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensus, intellegi necesse est esse

Is a Man, think'st thou, that reasons in this Manner, persuaded that there is but one God? How can it be, since his Argument in favour of a Plurality directly lies in the Face of One? For, if the general Consent of People to a Thing was an Evidence of its Truth, it would follow, that for a certain Time there were a great many Gods, since all the Nations of the Earth, for many Ages successively, were plung'd in Idolatry; and the *Israelites* alone, who scarce make a single Point compar'd to the whole World, knew the true God.

From all which it appears, that it was frivolous to assert that People of Genius and Learning could not possibly be so blind as to give into the Pagan Religion. When we consider the Submission that Men pay to first Prejudices imbib'd in Youth, and examine the Force of certain Opinions, which are look'd upon as infallible Principles, there can be no Surprise at admitting all the absurd Consequences flowing from them. 'Tis true, that there have been some Philosophers who have rejected the ridiculous Consequences attending the Multiplicity of Gods, being convinced that it was impossible such Extravagancies could be consistent with the Divine Nature; and yet it appears that Prejudice has had Influence with them, when, at the same Time that they rejected the Consequence of Principles, they had a blind Veneration for the Principles themselves, which they could not shake off. *The Additions (says Aristotle) that have been made to the Divine Nature, are only Fables accommodated to Men's Capacity. We know that there are Gods, and that their Essence is Divine. The rest is all Fiction,*

*esse Deos; quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas, cogitationes habemus. De quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est. Esse igitur Deos confitendum est.*

Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. I. Pag. 68.

*Fiction, invented for the Benefit of Society. From this Principle it is that the Gods are liken'd not only to Men but to Beasts \*.*

Pray consider, my dear *Isaac*, that *Aristotle*, while he condemns the Chimera's reported of the Gods, asserts the Plurality of those same Gods as a certain Truth, and as an undeniable Principle. However absurd and impious this Opinion might be, it was so universally acknowledg'd by the most noted of the *Greeks*, that the asserting the Unity of the Deity cost *Socrates* his Life; and it was no doubt the Fears of a like Fate that induced *Epicurus* to chime in with the Doctrine of *Polytheism*, which both he and his Disciples inwardly rejected. Though there could be nothing more ridiculous than to admit of Gods, and to deprive them of all Power; yet the Fear of exasperating People, who would have look'd upon meddling with their first Principles as a terrible Outrage, was a sufficient Motive, at least, for not formally opposing such Absurdities.

'Tis therefore in the profound Veneration which Men have for the first Sentiments imbib'd in Youth, that we're to look for a Reason of the Duration of Religion, and for the Obstinacy of its Professors. This is what induces them to stick to the Errors which they follow, and which they defend, because of their Affinity with other Errors to which they give the Name of Principles: So that we ought not to be surpris'd, if we see great Men of all Religions endeavouring to prove the Truth of their Principles,

\* Tradita autem sunt quaedam a majoribus nostris, & admodum antiquis, ac in fabulae figura posterioribus relicta, quod hi dii sint, universamque naturam divinam contineant. Cetera vero fabulose ad multitudinis persuasionem, & ad legum, ac ejus quod conferat opportunitatem, jam illata sunt. Homini formis namque, ac aliorum animalium nonnullis, similes eos dicunt, ac alia consequentia, similia iis quae dicta sunt. *Arist. Metaphys. Lib. XII. Cap. VIII. Pag. 744.*

Principles, really believing them, and loudly condemning all those who differ from them. A *Quaker* is capable of solid Reasoning in every thing foreign to *Quakerism*; for since, in Things wherein Religion is not concern'd, he examines the Principles upon which he goes, he's not more liable to be deceiv'd than another Man.

'T would be frivolous to object that a Man, who makes use of his Reason in the common Course of Things, cannot possibly be so far prepossess'd as to give in to the Absurdities of some modern Religions; or that the Professors, if they are Men of Genius, cannot seriously believe them. But to put it out of doubt that there's no Religion, how absurd soever, but what may be believed, we have only to examine the ridiculous Parts of the Pagan: And, since we shall find that eminent Men have agreed to the Plurality of Gods, a *Jew*, let him be ever so zealous, will be no longer surpris'd that *Newton* was an *Arian* \*, *Arnaud* and *Pascal* *Papists*, *Limburg* an *Arminian*, *Claude* a *Protestant*, *Barclay* a *Quaker*, and *Galenus* an *Anabaptist*. All those learn'd Men believ'd nothing so absurd, and so contrary to the Light of Nature, as the Plurality of Gods. To be sure Prejudice, and the Veneration that Men have for the Opinions which they look upon as first Principles, must needs have a very absolute Power over their Minds, in preventing them from perceiving their Blindness. No Author has given us a more lively Picture of the Folly and Extravagance of *Paganism* than one of the ancient *Nazarene* Doctors call'd *Arnobius*, by setting forth in a Manner as evident, as eloquent, the Confusion that must ensue upon an Equality of Offerings made to the Gods by two Nations at War. *In this Case* (says he) *the Gods would be at a Loss which Side to favour; if they remain'd neu-*  
ter,

\* See *Voltaire's* VIIth Letter about the *English* Nation.



ter, they must be ungrateful to both Parties, and by declaring themselves, must pull down with one Hand what they rear'd up with the other \*: Which was the Case, as we are told, at the Siege of Troy; upon which Occasion the Gods, not agreeing among themselves what Side they should favour, divided, and espoused, some of them, the Quarrel of the Greeks, and others protected the Trojans. Venus, whose Business was to preside in the Pleasures and Gallantries of Paphos and Cytherea, would, forsooth, act the Heroïn, and share in the Glory of Mars; for which she dearly paid, the rough Warriors not respecting, in the Heat of Battle, the Patroness of Love. But this is not what most sullies the Character of this Goddess; she is tax'd with worse Employments, which, if but mention'd, would make a virtuous Woman blush: And therefore one of the ancient Nazarene Pontiffs takes Occasion to reproach the Pagan Philosophers, *that, for the good Education of Youth, it was much better to set before them the Example of virtuous Men, than of the Deities whom they adored* †. Since

\* Quod si populi duo hostilibus dissidentes armis, sacrificiis paribus superiorum locupletaverant aras, alterque in alterum postulent vires sibi-que ad auxilium commendari, nonne iterum necesse est credi, se præmiis sollicitantur ut prosint, eos partes inter utrasque debere hæsitare, desigi nec reperire quid faciant, cum suas intelligant gratias sacrorum acceptionibus obligatas? Aut enim auxilia hinc & inde præstunt, id quod fieri non potest; pugnabunt enim contra ipsos se ipsi, contra suas gratias voluntates que nitentur; aut ambobus populis opem subministrare cessabant, id quod sceleris magni est, post impensam acceptamque mercedem.

Arnob. Lib. VII. Pag. 219, &c.

† Nihil homines tam insociabiles reddit vita perversitate, quam illorum decorum imitatio, quales describuntur & commendantur literis eorum. Denique illi doctissimi viri, qui rempublicam civitatemque terrenam, qualis eis esse debere videbatur, magis domesticis disputationibus requirebant, vel etiam describebant, quam publicis actionibus instituebant, atque formabant: Egregios atque laudabiles, quos putabant, homines potius, quam Deos suos, imitandos proponebant erudiendæ indoli juveni utis.

August. Epist. CCII. Pag. 864.

Since Persons so eminent for Learning, and whose Works, after so many Ages, are still the Admiration of Men of Letters, have been so weak as to believe the Plurality of Gods, and Gods so imperfect, thou'lt readily allow that few Mortals are so happy as entirely to get the better of all Prejudices; and that we ought not to be surpris'd at seeing Men of a superior Genius professing the most absurd Religions. Let us therefore be thankful to Heaven that we were born in that of *Moses*, and let it be our constant Care to discharge all the Duties of it. Adieu.

*Amsterdam, \*\*\*\*\*.*



*The End of the SECOND VOLUME.*





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## ERRATA.

**P**AGE 205, l. 28, &c. for *I am at least positive, that the Goddess Venus has, at least, as many Votaries here who perform their Vows to her, read and I am pretty certain that Venus has, at least, as many Votaries here who offer up their Vows to her*; p. 216, Notes, f. *some*, r. *a little*; p. 220, l. 27, for *to go*, r. *go to*; p. 239, l. 3, Notes, r. *divisibles*; *ib.* l. 24, Notes, f. *adque*, r. *ad qua*; *ib.* r. *respondit*; p. 240, l. 37, r. *perfectly*; p. 265, l. 5, f. *erected*, r. *created*; p. 284, f. *and that in all Countries*, r. *and in all Countries they are much alike*; p. 300, l. 16, f. *to throw*, r. *throw*; p. 315, l. ult. f. *the*, (*Catch Word*) r. *their*.



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